

PLUCK AND LUCK

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NEW YORK, MAY 26, 1920.

Price 7 Cents

JACK LEVER, THE YOUNG ENGINEER OF "OLD FORTY"; OR, ON TIME WITH THE NIGHT EXPRESS.

AND OTHER
STORIES

By JAS C. MERRITT



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CHAPTER I.—The Train-Wreckers.

Extending southward through a wild and picturesque tract of country in the thickest settled portion of New Mexico, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company had constructed a branch road, with an intended capacity of ten daily passenger trains, and freight in proportion. Many capitalists had deprecated the venture, seeing little prospect of future growth and business. But the projector of the enterprise, Mr. Simon Ford, millionaire and speculator, was a far-sighted man, and had not cast his vote at the directors' meeting in favor of the branch without having first carefully inspected the region. This had resulted in the discovery of an extremely rich mining and lumber country, as yet but little inhabited, though not difficult of access.

The branch was constructed in the course of two years, and Mr. Simon Ford undertook the management of it. Eastern agents formed bands of colonists, and in a short time numerous towns and promising cities sprung up along the line of the Southwest Pacific, as the new line was called. Those who were induced to settle in the new country found it virtually a miniature El Dorado. Among those who were first hardy enough to essay the hardships and perils of the frontier life was a man of medium height, not unhandsome features, and the air of a sharp business man, with a Creole nurse and ten-months old infant in her arms as his companions.

These three were seen in Western City, and it was at once surmised that the gentleman was a widower seeking a home in the new country, and that the child was his, and the nurse a servant of his broken household. How this might be, and who the gentleman was, or where he hailed from, was all to become a mystery, for that afternoon the express went through a bridge ten miles out of Western City, the father and nurse were burned to a crisp in the wreck, and the child only was found alive in a very peculiar position.

The locomotive had fallen into the ravine first, and in the crash the lever bar was thrown many feet away. When found the child was fast asleep in a thicket, clinging to the iron lever. This peculiar incident was not forgotten. No trace of other relatives could be found, neither could the name even of the dead man be learned. The little innocent child was without friends, money or a home. At this point Simon Ford proved himself a man of noble soul, and provided for the little waif by placing it in the care of a trusty woman, and setting aside a yearly sum for its sustenance.

"The child will be a man some day," he said, explanatively, "and then he will easily repay me."

The woman, Mrs. Gregory, became much attached to the little infant, which was christened publicly Jack Lever to suit Mr. Ford's fancy. Almost from that moment the popularity of Jack Lever began to grow. Naturally people became interested in the little survivor of the railroad wreck, and as Jack Lever grew older and became a schoolboy it needed no more than ordinary perception to recognize the finest of traits in his character rapidly forming. From the first Jack's tastes seemed instinctively to turn to machinery, and he was ever in his spare moments at the round-house, begging a ride on some locomotive, and fondly dreaming of the day when he should be able to fill the post of engineer himself. For this became Jack Lever's ambition. At an early age he was possessed of a surprising knowledge of the working of a locomotive, and at the age of fourteen he induced Mr. Ford to allow him to enter the round-house as an apprentice. His progress was so rapid that, incredible as it may seem, at the age of sixteen Jack Lever was the peer of locomotive engineers on the Southwest Pacific.

Jack Lever's fame spread rapidly. Everywhere along the line he was known as the young engineer of "Old Forty," the swiftest engine on the road. Up to this point Jack Lever's life had not been marked by any very extraordinary event. Now, however, at the age of eighteen, he entered upon a chapter of incidents more thrilling than which pen never portrayed. Jack was well aware of the fact that Mrs. Gregory was not his mother, and now that he was growing older, he became possessed of a desire to learn, if possible, something of his origin, which was pretty thoroughly clouded with mystery.

For some strange reason he was inclined to disagree with the majority, and would not accept the opinion that the man who died in the railroad wreck was his own father. There was no apparent way that he could disprove this, however. Thus matters were when one day Jack received a start of surprise to see Mr. Ford enter the round-house excitedly. The railroad manager fixed his gaze upon Jack.

"This is the best of good fortune," he cried "You are just the person I want, Jack Lever."

"What can I do for you?" asked Jack.

"I want a man of nerve and grit. No other, for a terrible discovery has been made. The ninety-third special for Santa Fe carried out one hundred thousand dollars in gold bars for the Southwest Mining Company. I have just learned that a gang of train-robbers, with Black Jose at the

head of them, intend to wreck the train just this side of Apache station. The train is beyond the last telegraph station, and is even now rushing on to doom."

Jack Lever's blood seemed turned to ice. The other inmates of the round-house drew nearer, and the words of the manager created a fearful thrill of horror.

"My heavens!" exclaimed one of the men. "Black Jose is once more up to his deviltry."

Black Jose was a noted Western character, a Mexican bandit and train-wrecker. Not a man there but had heard of him, and knew the fear that his name entailed.

"This is awful," said Jack Lever, huskily. "What can be done, Mr. Ford? If I can do anything do not hesitate to command me, for I am willing to risk my life."

"I knew that you would not fail me. It is too late of course to overtake and warn the train. It must go to destruction. But five hundred vigilants are ready to step aboard a special train and go down to Apache station. There must be a man and engine capable of taking that special down there sixty-five miles in one hour. I thought of you."

"You need go no further, Mr. Ford. Old Forty and I will take that special down there or make an extra wreck for this railroad. I am ready, and so is Bill Brandon, eh, Bill?"

The smoke-begrimed stoker who had fired on board Old Forty ever since that locomotive had been in charge of the boy engineer exploded:

"Bet yer hunkies on that. Let her go, Jonathan, and we'll get through by daylight. My mate's word is law."

So saying, he sprang aboard the grand old locomotive and began to fire up. The other engineers and attaches of the round-house cheered, while Jack Lever turned and gripped Mr. Ford's hand.

"We are ready when you are," he declared, briefly. "Let us have orders."

"I knew I could depend on you, Jack Lever," replied Mr. Ford. "Orders are to report with a train of five cars at the depot in the quickest possible time."

Jack Lever was aboard of Old Forty at once and in a few minutes had run the engine out onto the siding and hitched onto a train of cars. Down to the depot the train was swiftly backed. Several hundred men, vigilants so-called, armed with carbines and revolvers, were waiting to board the train. In those early days police regime was an unknown quantity in Western City, the law being supported chiefly by the vigilants. Mr. Ford and several other gentlemen, all members of the mining company whose treasure was aboard the ill-fated train, came to the cab of Old Forty, and one of them, the president, Mr. Herman Leclair, gripped Jack's hand and said in earnest tones:

"We do not expect you to save the train, my boy, but if these men, the vigilants, can reach the spot in time there is a good chance of overtaking and capturing the train robbers."

Jack Lever did not waste time in making a lengthy reply. He only murmured his thanks, took his position at the lever and throttle, and let out one sharp shriek with the whistle valve.

"All aboard!"

In less than it takes to tell it the vigilants were

aboard the relief train. Then the gong struck. There was a blast of steam, and Old Forty shot forward over the rails. Both Jack Lever and his mate knew the prime importance of reaching Apache station in the quickest possible time. Neither yielded to the dictates of fear. Mile after mile flashed by, and the chronometer marked the time, varying from fifty-two seconds to one minute to a mile, never less. At such a terrific rate of speed it seemed that something must certainly crash. But a skilled hand and a heart of oak was at the throttle-valve.

Twenty, thirty, forty miles had been passed in a little less than as many minutes. Ten miles more and Jack felt like the jockey who is in the homestretch with his horse, and clearing the cinders from his eyes let Old Forty out on the grade at the top notch of her speed. Apache station loomed up now in the distance. It was quickly reached and passed. Three miles more to the deep cut where it was planned to wreck the train. Faster and faster, like a thing of life, like a living thunderbolt, on fled the train. Suddenly a hoarse cry broke from Jack.

"Hurrah! We're on time!"

Far down the long grade was a dark, shapeless mass. Nearer they drew, and then the wrecked cars could be seen piled up in heaps. Smoke was rising from the wreck, and a great crowd of men were easily seen overhauling the cars. That they were the train-wreckers there was no doubt. One mile more. Down went the lever, out went the whistle valve. Shriek after shriek went up.

"Down brakes!"

It was a high grade, and in less experienced hands the relief train would have been also wrecked at that rate of speed. But Jack Lever was at the helm, the brave boy engineer, and he measured the distance with such consummate accuracy that Old Forty's nose barely touched the hindmost of the wrecked cars when the stop was made. The train-robbers had barely time to start a retreat, so quickly was this done, and the vigilants piled out of the cars quickly to effect their capture.

CHAPTER II.—The Circus People.

Such a wreck none there had ever before witnessed. The passenger cars were fearfully shattered, and the dead and dying were entangled in the ruins in great numbers. The inevitable fire had started and the pile with its human victims was fast being reduced to ashes. Pen cannot depict adequately the awful situation. Of course with the smash-up of the train the robbers had poured out of their covert and made a rush for what was left of the treasure car. Five armed men had been stationed in this car, but of those not one was alive to defend his trust. The treasure car was the worst mangled of any.

The big iron safe in which was the hundred thousand dollars in gold, had crashed through the side of the car and was exposed to view. For this the robbers made a rush. Hammer and chisel were employed to break open the big iron box, and this was what delayed the robbers. It required nigh half an hour to force a way into the safe. All this while, such of the passengers as survived the wreck, were intimidated and driven

away by the carbines of the train-robbers. The arrival of the vigilants, however, put a new face upon matters. The robbers had barely succeeded in getting the treasure out of the safe when the vigilants were upon the spot. The scene which followed was a most exciting one.

There was a rapid interchange of shots, the train-wreckers beating a retreat. Recognizing the importance of decisive action, the leader of the vigilants urged his men on, and developing lines to the right and left, sought to cut off the retreat of the foe. A genuine battle was in progress. From the cab of Old Forty Jack Lever saw all this enacted in a very few seconds. He saw at a glance that the vigilants were too strong for the train-robbers, and felt a thrill of satisfaction. He was about to turn back into the cab when Bill Brandon, who had been looking out at the opposite side, clutched his arm.

"Dang me! Look at that, Jack!"

Jack did look, and beheld a sight which caused the hot blood to surge in a maddening torrent through his brain.

"My heavens!" he exclaimed, and without another word left his engine with a bound. His whole being was on fire, and his action was highly warrantable. Bill Brandon would have joined him, but it required the presence of at least one man on the engine.

What Jack Lever had seen was a sight which would have aroused the chivalrous impulses of any honorable man. In the grasp of a couple of ruffians was a young girl, who had just extricated herself from the wreck of a car. In that instant Jack had little time to note other than the fact that she was slight in frame and as beautiful as a dream, with a flower-like face and tresses of bright gold, which hung down her back in a wavy mass. It was the purpose of the train wreckers to abduct her.

But not if Jack Lever knew it. Before another scream could escape the girl's lips, the plucky young engineer had descended upon the villains like an avalanche. They stood a scant chance with the stout-armed young fellow, who dashed them to the ground, and throwing one arm about the young girl drew her behind him. The would-be abductors beat an inglorious retreat and left the field to Jack Lever. The young engineer's wrath now subsided, and he doffed his hat and turned to the object of his gallantry and bowed low. Her fright had now vanished, and was succeeded by an expression of pain and alarm.

"Oh, I owe you much!" she cried in a frantic way. "But my father is in that car, and likely to be burned, and Mrs. Maynard, too. Oh! Heaven help us to save them!"

It did not require Jack Lever an instant of time to comprehend the truth. He gave no further thought to the train-robbers.

"I'll save them for you, or I'll die in the attempt!" he cried, with great earnestness. "Hey, there, Bill Brandon, give me a hand on this car!"

With this he snatched an ax from the locomotive bridge and made a dash for the burning car. It was rapidly being consumed by fire, and yet contained a number of the passengers alive, and who were unable to extricate themselves. Their cries for help were answered by sturdy Jack

Lever. Bill Brandon, in obedience to his mate's summons, ventured to leave the cab of Old Forty and also lent a hand. The car was badly encumbered, but in an incredible space of time an opening had been made and through this, three in number, they crept in safety. The other passengers in that car were in the embrace of death. The first to emerge from the burning car was a woman of middle age, fairly good looking and with eyes like piercing bits of steel and a face which showed shrewdness acquired by long contact with the hard side of the world. Jack gave her a cursory glance and heard her addressed as Mrs. Maynard, and also heard her accost the distressed young girl:

"Thank goodness, we are safe out of that trap, Arline Gray. Oh, you needn't snivel, your precious pa is all safe, and there he comes without a scratch. A very good thing for you, Duncan Gray."

The young girl's father, Duncan Gray, was revealed as a man of medium height, open face, and marred only in its expression by a careworn look, which could readily be seen was the result of some deep-seated burden of the mind. He smiled and took the young girl in his arms. The third passenger was an elderly lady, whom the others now left to assort her rescued baggage.

"Arline," exclaimed Jack Lever, involuntarily, as he gazed at the young girl. "A beautiful name, and it well befits the owner. I have never seen her equal in the West."

Jack was on his way to the cab of Old Forty when he was intercepted by all three of these people, who proceeded to shower expressions of gratitude upon him.

"It is nothing," protested modest Jack. "Indeed, I did no more than my duty."

"Nevertheless we owe our lives to you," protested Duncan Gray. "And we are not blind to the fact."

"You will not refuse to accept our thanks," declared Arline, sweetly.

Jack felt his heart thump. He turned as red as a peony as he bowed and scraped before her. It was an uncommon thing for Jack to lose his self-possession.

"I was happy to serve you," he began.

But Duncan Gray interrupted him.

"We do not mean to forget the debt we owe you," he exclaimed warmly. "I want to ask as a favor, young man, that you give me your name."

"My name is Jack Lever."

"And did you bring this train down here?"

"I did."

"You are a brave young man," cried Duncan Gray, warmly. "Here is something for you. Be sure to come and see me."

The man pressed a small wad of paper into Jack's hand, and before the young engineer could say more they had gone. Jack gazed after Arline a moment and then drew a quick, deep breath.

Then it occurred to him to examine what he had in his hand. He opened his palm and there before his eyes lay a crisp one hundred dollar note. A slip of paper and a small package of blue tickets beside it. The tickets Jack comprehended at once, and the paper was easily extended into a long show bill, replete with dash-

ing headlines, bold captions and cuts of wild animals. Thus it read:

GREAT SOUTHERN CIRCUS!
THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
WONDERFUL MENAGERIE!

Great Stud of Trained Horses, under the tutorship of the most wonderful Lady Equestrienne in the World,

MADAM LUCILLE MAYNARD!

The only lady living who has accomplished the feat of riding seven horses at once. Also,

PETITE ARLINE,
THE DASHING BAREBACK CHILD RIDER!
DUCAN GRAY, MANAGER.

More of the same sort followed, but Jack Lever almost ceased breathing, so intense was his astonishment. He read the bill closely, and then murmured slowly:

"She is a circus rider! It does not seem possible. Why, she is an angel in the flesh. I cannot believe it."

Jack had ever been accustomed to regard ladies of the circus ring as rather a degenerate class of females. Yet he would have staked his life upon the good name of the child rider, Petite Arline, and he had never seen her but once. However, he returned to his duties, placing the tickets and the money in his pocket. He had noted the fact that the tickets were good for admission the succeeding night, when the Great Southern Circus was to exhibit in Western City. By this time the vigilants had scattered the train-robbers. The treasure box, however, yet remained in the possession of Black Jose, the relief party having failed to recapture it.

The vigilants were discussing further pursuit into the hills, and it was decided to put the dead and wounded of the train wreck aboard the relief train and send it back to Western City, when Jack Lever's attention was attracted by a thrilling and terrible sight. Wedged between two sections of a car and within a few feet of devouring flames was a man, with face of ashen hue and voice made husky with repeated and unavailing cries for help. It was more than Jack could stand, and he paused to release the man if possible from the certain clutches of grim death.

CHAPTER III.—The Stranger's Rescue.

With the utmost dispatch Jack proceeded to hew his way through the obstructing timbers, and soon reached the side of the suffering stranger. The stranger's hips were wedged between timbers in an inextricable fashion. Beyond this he had suffered no injury of any consequence. He hailed Jack's appearance with a profuse demonstration of joy and gratitude.

"God bless you!" he cried, fervently. "A few minutes more and the flames will reach me. It is an easy matter to remove the timber which pins me in here, though I am not in a position to do it."

"Ay, sir," cried Jack Lever, heartily. "You shall not die, if I can do aught to save you. Steady now!"

Jack caught hold of the timber strongly and in a masterly way hove it aside so that an adjoining section of the car was loosened, and this enabled the entrapped man to quickly crawl out of the debris. He was upon his feet withal, beyond a few bruises and a temporary lameness of the hips, as well as ever. There was a light in his eyes which boded good will for Jack Lever. Instinctively Jack felt drawn toward him.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart!" he said, fervently, gripping the young engineer's hand. "You have saved my life."

"It was a pleasure to serve you in that way," protested Jack.

"But it is a debt, nevertheless, and I will repay you for it some day. I am a man of wealth and——"

"Keep your money," said Jack, bluntly. "I do not want it. Your gratitude which you have already expressed is quite sufficient."

With this Jack turned to his engine. He leaped into the cab and in a few moments reappeared with a long-nosed oil can, which he proceeded to use upon the bearings of the locomotive. The stranger gazed after him a moment and seemed moved by a strange emotion.

"It cannot be," he muttered. "And yet it is her face, I will swear to it. Oh, heaven, what years of sorrow have been mine. If I should chance to be rewarded with success, what a merciful award of Providence it would be."

Without further hesitation the stranger approached Jack Lever. In his hand was a white card which he extended to Jack.

"Pardon me for troubling you further," he said in a tone which was so sorrowful that the boy engineer was touched. "But I must at least let you know who it is that you have rendered so great a favor to. Accept my card."

Jack took the card with a bow and read the name upon it.

SYLVESTER RAYMOND.

He became conscious at the same moment that the man Raymond was peering sharply into his face, and that he was also much agitated. Jack looked up in great surprise, when Raymond clutched his arm and in a tense voice cried:

"Oh, forgive me, but you have made a great impression upon me. Your face is—is so very much like—that is, it reminds me of a very dear friend, who is now dead and long buried."

"A friend!" exclaimed Jack in surprise, and before he could say more the stranger continued:

"Yes, and do not deem me rude if I ask of you a question."

"Proceed," said Jack, with wonderment.

"What is your name?"

"Jack Lever."

The stranger's countenance fell. He seemed thoughtful a moment, and then his face again lit up.

"Are your parents living?"

"No," replied Jack. "At least, not to my knowledge. I do not remember them, and never saw them."

A great cry broke from the stranger's lips. He clutched Jack's arm, and gazed once more yearningly, wistfully into his face. Jack now began to entertain the belief that he was a madman.

"Tell me the story of your life," he cried, eagerly. "I must know it. You have her face, and it may be that I have at last found that for which I have so long searched. Listen! You are an orphan. If I have guessed aright you were kidnapped or stolen from your home when an infant. Perhaps it is in my power to find at least one of your lost parents for you."

A great wave of emotion surged over Jack Lever. His eyes gleamed like stars.

"Do you mean that?" he asked.

"Every word of it."

Sylvester Raymond would have said more, but at that moment a sharp whistle came from the conductor of the train.

"Go ahead!"

Jack Lever's inherent impulse was to attend to his duty promptly. The stranger had struck a sympathetic chord in his bosom and had excited his interest, but in spite of all this he could not neglect the call to duty. Hurriedly he exclaimed:

"If you wish to see me again you will find me at the round-house in Western City any forenoon. If you can aid me to find even the slightest trace of my true parents you will have done me the greatest of favors."

Before Sylvester Raymond could say more Jack was aboard his engine and had let the throttle fly open. The train moved forward and rolled swiftly away. Sylvester Raymond was left gazing in a stupefied way after it. On like the wind sped the special for Western City. Mile after mile fled by, as like a meteor Old Forty hauled the mighty load up or down grade at the same terrific rate.

When the intelligence reached Western City of the result of the vigilants' expedition against the train-wreckers, great excitement was created. One thing was certain. None in the band of vigilants would ever again be popular in Western City if they failed to return with the one hundred thousand dollars in gold. As soon as the cars were unloaded of their freight of dead and wounded, a new engine was detailed and sent immediately back to the scene of the disaster. Jack Lever did not go with it, as this was not now necessary, and after running Old Forty into the round-house and carefully housing her for the night, he left Bill Brandon and went to his lodgings. Here, in the quiet of his room, he pondered for some time over the strange actions and words of Sylvester Raymond.

"Ah, well," he exclaimed finally, "there is likely nothing in it. He has fancied that I bear a resemblance to some deceased friend. Undoubtedly, Mr. Sylvester Raymond is a little over-balanced. At any rate, the only thing I can do is to await his visit."

With this he left his room, and, as though impelled by some impulse which he could not account for, he made his way once more to the depot. A large crowd were awaiting the second arrival of the special from the scene of the accident. Other trains had, of course, been delayed, but the arrival of the special would clear the track. Railroad workmen had been sent down to replace the broken rails and clear the debris. In a few seconds after Jack's arrival at the depot the special came in bringing the delayed passengers, and a few of the disheartened vigilants. The others were yet in the hills pursuing the train-

wreckers. The special had barely got out of the way when Jack Lever saw Mr. Herman Leclair and Mr. Ford rush excitedly out of the office. Mr. Ford's eyes instantly alighted upon Jack.

"This is good fortune, Jack Lever," he cried, joyfully. "I have just received a dispatch that the engine drawing the Great Southern Circus has blowed out her cylinder head and is lying helpless on a siding twenty miles out. An engine must be immediately sent out for the train, and Old Forty is the only machine in the round-house."

"Enough, sir," cried Jack Lever, always ready. "I will have Old Forty out for orders in less than ten minutes."

Without waiting for the gentlemen's expressions of approval, Jack Lever started for the round-house. True to his word, in less time than he had stated, he was ready for orders. The orders were to bring in the train and disabled engine, and soon Jack Lever and his pet locomotive were flying over the rails through the moon-lit night. Ten miles on the homeward journey at a certain hour Jack was to side track the train to allow the Santa Fe express to pass. These were the orders given him, and he proceeded to faithfully follow them. He reached the scene of the accident without mishap. It required but a few moments to straighten out matters and couple the disabled locomotive and train to Old Forty. Soon the train, drawn by a fresh engine, was once more swiftly on its way. There were fifty odd cars in the circus train, bearing vans of animals and all the paraphernalia of the big show.

As soon as the train reached Western City Mr. Gray hunted Jack up, congratulated him upon his achievement, and asked him to be his guest at dinner that day. Jack said he would accept the invitation. Jack felt particularly happy that morning and not a little proud of his day's work. Mingled with a sense of deep flattery by the invitation of Mr. Gray, was a thought of Petite Arline, the most beautiful young girl he thought whom he had ever seen. There was just a suppressed hope in his heart that she might be present, and that he might see her again, if even but for a few moments.

Apart from his duties on the locomotive, Jack Lever was one of the best dressed and handsomest young men in Western City. Upon the present occasion he emerged from his apartments, an Adonis, at least so far as physical perfection went. If Arline Gray was at all susceptible to masculine beauty she must certainly be impressed with Jack now. The young engineer was determined not to be late at his host's table, and accordingly in due season appeared at the elegant Western Hotel and sent up his name to Mr. Duncan Gray. A few moments later he was ushered into the circus manager's suite. Mr. Gray met him personally at the threshold and greeted him warmly. At his shoulder were Arline and Madame Lucille Maynard. Jack was heartily greeted, though he fancied there was a light of enmity slumbering in the eyes of Madame Lucille, whom he instinctively disliked at first meeting. A dozen others were present, all members of the circus troupe, and in an inner room a sumptuous repast was spread. All this was in honor of the young engineer who had saved the train, and Jack

felt his cheeks burn with conscious pleasure and gratification.

The dinner hour passed like a dream to Jack Lever. He was treated like a prince, and received so many reassuring smiles from beautiful Arline that his heart's action even threatened to become seriously deranged. Clever speeches were made and toasts proposed, to which Jack made very graceful replies, which only increased his popularity with the circus people. Thus the affair went off with great eclat, though before it was over Jack became aware of one subtle and strange fact which jarred his nerves somewhat while it mystified him. Madame Lucille, if he read human nature aright, was not pleased with an existing state of affairs. This, Jack very cutely discerned, was his pleasant intimacy with Arline. A frown marred her features. A swift, evil glance would shoot from her eyes whenever the young people were for a moment together. This puzzled the young engineer intensely.

"It is very queer," he muttered to himself. "What can that woman have against me. I do not like her. If I ever saw a bad woman in my life, she is that one. Yet she is displeased with my advances toward Arline. She seems to play the part of preceptor toward the young girl, who seems to fear her. She has some sort of hold upon Mr. Gray and Arline, or I miss my guess."

Before the day was out certain thrilling incidents were destined to intensify the strange feeling of the young engineer.

CHAPTER IV.—At the Circus.

Even after the dinner was over Duncan Gray, who had taken a great liking to Jack Lever, would not permit the young engineer to take his leave. The circus people were now making ready for the afternoon performance, and the manager insisted upon Jack's accompanying him to the show.

"You are my guest," he said, heartily. "Do you know, I feel like a brother toward you, Jack Lever. You have done me a great favor, and I never forget such a thing."

"You are very kind," said Jack, modestly. "But I fear you overrate the matter, sir."

"It cannot be overrated," protested Mr. Gray.

And thus Jack was overwhelmed with the kindness of his new made friends, not that he was loth to go to the circus, by no means. He was more than anxious to see the wonderful bareback riding of Petite Arline. So he went with Mr. Gray to the grounds in the manager's own carriage. Jack saw Madame Lucille gaze on him with a light of positive disapproval in her eyes. The drive to the circus grounds was quickly made. Arrived there, Jack was conducted to the manager's tent, and then given the liberty of the tents.

"After the show come back here," said Mr. Gray, as he now turned his attention to his multifarious duties.

Jack sauntered out and took a seat in the main tent. After the performance, as Jack was passing out, he heard hoarse, constrained voices from a passage between the canvas, and Arline's name was used.

"I tell ye, madam, there'll be no fail. If ye will only leave that part with us we'll answer for it, be sure."

"Everything depends on you. But you must not forget the girl is sharp."

"Do your part and we'll do ours."

"I will. Report to-night."

"At nine o'clock sharp we'll be—you know where. If the gal is there the case is settled."

A strange thrill ran through Jack Lever's frame. He stood quite still for a moment. It was unconsciously that he had played the part of eavesdropper. Ordinarily he would have kept right on, unheeding all, but a certain fact interested him. The name of Arline had been used. He was interested in Arline, therefore, he was curious to know what all this meant. Suppressing his curiosity no longer, he lifted one corner of the tent flap. Madame Lucille stood not ten feet from him with a riding-whip in her hand, gazing after a couple of ruffianly-looking men, who were sneaking away in the crowd beyond. There was an expression upon the madam's face not good to see, and neither did Jack like the looks of the two men. He took good care that Madame Lucille did not see him, and was about to turn away, when he saw a man step out of the crowd and accost the woman.

He recognized the man with not a little of interest as the very person whom he had rescued from the burning car at Apache station, and who had given the name of Sylvester Raymond. For the life of him Jack could not have moved then. There seemed to be a mutual recognition between Sylvester Raymond and Madame Lucille, though the latter's lip curled with disdain. The man bowed almost humbly, and said in a voice which elicited Jack's pity, he hardly knew why:

"You see, Madame Lucille, I have followed as I said. I know that you can tell me the fate of my lost child, and if you have charity in your heart you will not refuse me."

The woman laughed contemptuously.

"What a fool you are," she said, scornfully. "You are pleased to lay much at my door, are you not? What have you to warrant the belief that I know aught of your stolen child?"

"At that time," said Raymond, in a positive tone, "you were the only enemy that I had."

"Enemy," said the woman, bitterly. "You are right, and while life lasts you may thirst for my friendship and never get it. Oh, you foully wronged me, Sylvester Raymond—innocent, confiding girl that I was. The day that you broke faith with me and wedded Blanche Dean, then you drove all the good out of me, and made me the adventuring woman that I have been ever since. Oh, you are responsible for that, Sylvester Raymond—responsible for the wrecking of my life! And now you dare to come to me for a favor? Wretch! If I knew where your lost child was at this very moment no earthly power would induce me to disclose the fact."

Sylvester Raymond cringed before these words, and wrung his hands with a bitter, despairing cry.

"You are wrong," he cried. "I never meant to do you injury. I wedded Blanche Dean because I loved her. Oh, Heaven, how my life has been wrecked! Our darling child kidnapped—my beloved wife in her grave, with her dying command that I devote my life to the quest of our baby—lost, stolen by a fiend. It is hard—hard!"

From the depths of his impulsive heart Jack Lever pitied the old man.

CHAPTER V.—The Abduction.

Leaving the circus grounds now, Jack had started for the city, when he bethought himself of Mr. Gray's request that he should come to him after the show. Instantly he turned back to make his way to the manager's tent. Mr. Gray was waiting for him, and Jack rode back to the city with him. He longed to tell the manager what he had heard, but as it seemed to him a delicate subject, he did not venture to do so. When he parted with Mr. Gray at the hotel, the manager's last words were:

"Come to the show to-night, Jack."

"Yes," muttered the young engineer to himself, as he turned away, "I believe I will attend the circus to-night, though I had intended to scour up the brass works on Old Forty. Mr. Leclair will send Sixty-five down with the express to-night, and it is my night off. I am a little interested in this plan of Madame Lucille's."

With this he went home, and after supper, as there was yet an hour before the performance would begin, he sauntered down to the station. Almost the first person he met was Mr. Leclair.

"Ah, Jack, my boy," he exclaimed, "you're just the fellow I want!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Jack, his heart sinking a trifle as he guessed what was coming. "How can I serve you?"

"We have a chartered special engine and one car, which will leave here between ten and eleven. The run will be only to Apache station. Will you take it down?"

What could Jack say? Duty was paramount, although he wanted badly to attend the circus. He thought of Arline and half groaned. Yet he bravely replied:

"If you desire, sir, I will take the special out."

Mr. Leclair clapped his hands together, and was about to signify his approval, when suddenly a man standing near, who had overheard all, stepped forward.

"If you please, Mr. Leclair," he exclaimed, "if Mr. Lever has no objections, I would like to take the special out. I have a brother at Apache who is likely to die before morning, and it would give me an opportunity to see him and get back before my freight goes out in the morning."

"You, Jem Holland!" exclaimed Mr. Leclair. "Why—that is—you say that you have a sick brother at Apache?"

"Yes, sir."

"So far as I am concerned," said Jack, with difficulty restraining his eagerness, "I am more than willing that Holland should have the trip."

"Very well; let it be so, then. You may be on hand, Holland, with Number Fifty. Do not fail."

Jack was a trifle dizzy with a reflection upon his narrow escape. He felt like thanking Holland, but the fellow had slunk away into the gloom. It was a little past the opening hour when Jack reached the circus grounds. Madame Lucille was just going on for her act. Jack passed unnoticed into the dressing tent. Even before the crisis came, he experienced a premoni-

tion of impending evil. He had just entered the outer dressing tent, when a terrible wild shriek of terror in a feminine voice went ringing through the canvas. It acted like a galvanic shock upon Jack Jever—for upon the instant he recognized the voice and guessed the truth.

Guessed it, even before—the first one to reach the spot—he tore aside the curtains and was in Petite Arline's private tent. In that instant a vision, which made his hot young blood turn cold, lay before him. Two ruffians, the identical ones whom he saw Madame Lucille talking with a few hours before, were at the far end of the tent, and in their clutches, white in insensibility, was Arline Gray. Not all the power on earth could have stayed Jack Lever then. A cry terribly hoarse and angry escaped his lips, and he sprang to the rescue. Both ruffians saw him coming. Neither dared to cope with him. They were desperate characters, working a daring game, and would stop at no obstacle, no sacrifice.

"Give it to him," growled one of them. "Curse it! The game is up!"

Only a moment of delay and Petite Arline would have been saved. But quick as a flash a revolver was in the ruffian's hand and—Crack! With a sharp cry the young engineer reeled and fell. He did not stay down, but staggered to his feet. The ball had merely grazed his skull, producing a momentary dizziness, that was all. Yet it was sufficient to give the villains time to escape. When Jack had recovered and the tent filled with excited people Petite Arline and her captors were gone. Jack Lever did not wait to afford explanations. He was all right now, and wiping the blood from his face, he dashed out into the night in pursuit. But the villains had made such good time that Jack did not succeed in finding any trace of them. He returned to the roundhouse, and shortly Mr. Gray, grief-stricken, joined him.

"Come with me to my hotel," said Mr. Gray, entreatingly. "Until I am out of my trouble I cannot let you go from me. With your help we will find Arline."

Jack, whose time was his own for the rest of the night, could not refuse this appeal. He accompanied the circus manager to the Western Hotel, where they partook of a late meal, though Mr. Gray had but little appetite. After the meal they proceeded to the suite of reception rooms accorded the circus people. Jack entertained no more welcome idea than the quest for Arline Gray. A good opportunity was afforded him, for it would be some days before Old Forty would be ready to run again, being overhauled, and as the engineers' list was full, it was hardly likely his services would be required by the railroad in that time. At least, he could devote a few days to the effort to rescue Arline.

He had, as he firmly believed, hit upon the truth in the matter, which was that the abduction was the work of scheming Lucille Maynard. Satisfied of this, he had already outlined a mode of procedure. Seated in the reception room, Mr. Gray now asked:

"Now tell me, Jack, what do you think of it? Who is at the bottom of this affair, and who is responsible for this dark night's work?"

Jack Lever was never one to beat about the bush. Bluntness and honesty were natural per-

quisites, so he followed the bent of his impulses, and gazing straight into Mr. Gray's eyes, replied:

"You have asked me a direct question, and it calls for an unequivocal answer. You shall have it. The person whom I should hold responsible for the kidnapping of Arline is no other than Madame Lucille Maynard."

Words cannot depict the effect of this declaration upon Mr. Gray. For a moment he was like one stricken with a terrible blow, then he lapsed almost into a stupor.

"Are you sure of that?" he asked decisively. "Tell me your reasons for such a belief."

Jack acquiesced in this, and detailed an account of the meeting of Lucille with the two rough men back of the tent and the conversation exchanged. Mr. Gray listened to this, all the while the victim of most fearful emotions. He paced the floor like a caged wild beast wringing his hands and exclaiming bitterly:

"The worst has come. All is lost. I am a ruined man!"

Jack had finished his recital. Mr. Gray came to him, and it could be seen that he was half-insane with grief.

"Jack Lever, will you be a friend to me?"

Jack was surprised at the question, but replied:

"I will, sir."

"Then let me tell you the awful truth about that woman. I am——"

"Hold!"

It was a sharp, ringing feminine voice, almost masculine in its intonations, which interrupted Mr. Gray. From behind silk hangings in a corner of the room, a square-shouldered woman, magnificently dressed, stepped forth. It was Lucille Maynard herself. Her appearance held Duncan Gray and Jack Lever spellbound with astonishment and utter confusion. Her eyes gleamed, and her manner was like that of a tigress.

"I have heard all," she said, with a jeering laugh. "I know all. So you overheard us, did you, Jack Lever? You are a meddler and no good will come to you of it. What if it is true that Arline was spirited away by my plan? What are you going to do about it?"

Jack was the first to recover. He drew himself up grandly.

"There is a law, and that crime is within its pale," he said. "You are not exempt from justice."

Lucille's eyes danced with actual delight.

"Then you will have me arrested and tried?" she sneered.

"Yes," replied Jack firmly.

"You cannot do it."

"I cannot?"

"No. Where are your proofs?"

"I saw and overheard your plot. You know that."

"I admit nothing. Were you the only witness?"

"Yes."

"Then your evidence is worthless. My word is as good as yours in a court of justice. Swear you, and I will swear against you."

CHAPTER VI.—The Veil Is Torn Aside.

With crushing force the truth of his utter disability to prove anything against the woman

dawned upon Jack Lever. She was the sharpest woman he had ever met, and he instinctively realized that he must meet her with weapons fully as keen as those she wielded. Mr. Gray had stood a witness of all, pallid and trembling. Jack was silent a moment.

"At least, we are obliged to you for so frankly showing us your hand in this matter," he said finally.

"Beware or you will more than see my hand in it—you will feel it."

"You are a very bad woman!"

She laughed contemptuously.

"You are complimentary," she said, with sarcasm.

"Will you be kind enough to go further and state your purpose in abducting Arline Gray? What is the end you wish to gain?"

Jack had not yet lost command of himself. He was rigid as steel and stern in his speech. The cunning woman shrugged her shoulders and replied craftily:

"There is no way in which you can implicate me in this affair. I am not in any way likely to commit myself."

"It is inexplicable. Is it for revenge upon Mr. Gray for some real or fancied injury?"

"I acknowledge nothing. Prove your claims if you can."

With the air of one in a trance Duncan Gray lifted his head and took a step forward. But there was no firmness in his manner and his voice was weak and supplicating.

"Lucille," he exclaimed with an effort, "have mercy—do not crush me. You cannot say that I have not used you well. I have refused you nothing. Spare me now—and I beg of you, give me back Arline."

Madame Lucille drew a deep, hard breath and gazed at the broken man. Then she laughed scornfully.

"Poor driveling idiot!" was all she said.

The words acted upon Duncan Gray like a maddening elixir. "For two years you have entwined your noxious self about my life and my business like a poisonous weed, like a cruel serpent, ready to crush me at the slightest provocation. Your grip on me has been a strong one, you have held me in terrorism, have wrung my heart, have extorted my fortune from me," said Gray, in a bitter, terrible voice. "And now to cap the climax, for a refusal to give my daughter's hand in marriage to a desperado and an outlaw, the vilest scoundrel in the West, you have deliberately aided in stealing her from me forcibly, with the purpose of a devil. Curse you! I defy you. Turn me over to the law. Let me hang for a crime of which I am in the sight of God not guilty, but in my last breath upon the scaffold I will curse you."

In spite of her hardihood, the woman could not repress a slight shiver at this denunciation. But she overcame the momentary repugnance, and a vengeful light gleamed in her eyes.

"For every word that you have uttered I will wring a drop of blood from your heart!" she said frigidly and vengefully. "At last you have broken the truce, my dear Mr. David Graham, alias Duncan Gray. Ha! murderer, you will have time to reflect upon your folly while preparing for the scaffold. You cannot escape, for detectives are

in Western City to-day upon your track. I could have saved you, but you will appeal to me for mercy now in vain. It looks as though I had a little the best of the situation, David Graham. I am beyond reach of the law, I have your money, your life, and—I have Arline. How sweet to be a winner! Ha, ha, ha! Au revoir!”

The door closed with a ringing snap behind what Jack Lever was fain to admit was the worst specimen of feminine duplicity and badness he had ever seen. He made no move to restrain her, nor did Mr. Gray either. For some moments a terrible silence reigned. There was a painful, a despairing sense uppermost in the mind of each, that Lucille Maynard held much the best of the situation. But Jack Lever was not yet wholly satisfied as to how matters really stood. He turned to the stricken circus manager.

“Can you tell me, Mr. Gray,” he asked, “how you came under this woman’s evil power? How did she get any grip on you? Surely you are not guilty of that crime of which she speaks.”

“Before God!” cried the agonized man wildly, “I am as innocent of crime as you, Jack Lever. I swear it!”

“Then why need you fear her?”

“Let us sit down and I will tell you all about it,” said the circus manager, a strange calm coming over him.

Jack complied, and listened to a narrative which gave him a better understanding of affairs. Mr. Gray went on:

“Fifteen years ago I was a merchant in Denver. The town was young but prosperous, and I was a happy man, with a wife and one child, Arline.

“We lived in good style, and I was fast becoming wealthy. At that time this woman, Lucille Maynard, purporting to be twice a widow, also resided in Denver. She had one child, a son, by her first husband, who was a Spanish gentleman of wealth by the name of Soreno, I think. Her boy bore his father’s name, although the mother claimed the name of her second husband, Maynard. Further than this I know nothing of her antecedents. The boy’s name was Jose, and he proved a dissolute character, and is now known as ‘Black’ Jose, the outlaw.”

“My God!” exclaimed Jack Lever. “You do not mean to say that Lucille Maynard is the mother of Black Jose?”

“That is the truth,” declared Mr. Gray. “Well, to continue, before he left Denver as a young man, Jose Soreno was attracted by Arline. Of course I would entertain no such idea with pleasure, and the youth became very angry with me. He left home and went very quickly to the bad. His mother claimed to have disowned him entirely, and thus matters were when misfortune overtook me.

“First my wife died. Coming home one night from my business, I heard a scuffle and a loud cry in a side street. Reaching the spot, I bent down over a man with a knife in his breast, dead—murdered. The blood became smeared upon my hands. I recognized the victim of the awful crime as my worst enemy in Denver.

“I started up with horror when officers pounced upon me. Blood was upon my hands, tell-tale, and I was accused of the crime. Evidence was against me. I went to prison, and would have

been hung, but that I was enabled to escape. Since then I have changed my name from David Graham to Duncan Gray, and have been practically safe from identification. This bad woman, Lucille Maynard, penetrated my disguise, and has since held me in her power. You know the rest. It has been a hard fight. I am an innocent man, but if I must hang, let the end come. I can fight it off no longer.”

He ceased speaking. Jack Lever was powerfully impressed.

“You shall never hang!” he exclaimed impulsively. “It would be well to make your escape now from this hotel——”

Jack paused. The door of the room had opened, and a man with a revolver in hand and a detective’s star upon his breast, stood upon the threshold.

CHAPTER VII.—Under Arrest.

In that instant Jack Lever realized that a fearful crisis was at hand. His handsome face paled, and he started back with an exclamation of dismay. David Graham, on the contrary, was as calm as could be. He folded his arms and stood in the middle of the floor with a resignation born of wearied despair. The end had come, and he was not loth to accept his fate, even though it was death. The detective smiled ironically, and exclaimed in a sharp tone:

“At last you are tracked down, David Graham. Murder will out.”

The circus manager made a sort of desperate effort to evade the officer. His features did not change, as he replied stolidly:

“You have evidently mistaken your man. I am Duncan Gray, manager of the Great Western Circus.”

The detective laughed scornfully.

“Is that so?” he rejoined. “Were you ever acquainted with a man by the name of David Graham?”

“I decline to answer that question.”

“It matters little whether you do or not. It is quite impossible for you to evade the truth. David Graham, I arrest you upon the charge of murder.”

A slight cry escaped Jack Lever’s lips, but the circus manager never wavered.

“You have first to prove that I am David Graham before you can serve that warrant.”

The officer advanced a step nearer Mr. Gray.

“Bare your arm,” he commanded. “David Graham had a tattooed anchor upon his left arm.”

Without a moment’s hesitation the circus manager rolled up his sleeve. Jack drew nearer, and the detective also. There was the white flesh from shoulder to wrist, but not even a pin scratch marred its evenness. The tattooed anchor was not there. The detective recoiled with an exclamation of amazement. Disappointment was for a moment stamped upon his face. Jack, with a thrill of triumph, fancied the victory won. David Graham, as we shall call the circus manager, however, did not change countenance.

“Are you satisfied?” he asked the detective.

“Yes—no!” said the detective, in an uncertain manner. “It is all very queer. I do not under-

stand it. I am sure you are the man. Can there be a mistake?"

He drew a paper from his pocket and glanced over it. Then he said in a calm way:

"I must see the right foot. It is possible that there is a mistake."

Jack fancied that a shade of deeper pallor came into the circus manager's face. But he did not betray trepidation.

"Look here, my friend," he said, in a brusque way, "you will gain nothing by persecuting me further. I have once given you proof, and that is sufficient."

"It is not sufficient."

"It is all I will yield."

"Manacle that man!" commanded the chief of detectives. "Also remove the boot from the right foot."

Before the men could lay hands upon him, the circus manager turned an ashen face to Jack and declared:

"I am lost!"

In a twinkling he was manacled, and one of the men removed his boot and the stocking on his right foot. As the foot was bared the great truth was revealed. The little toe was indeed missing.

"Ah!" cried the chief of detectives exultantly. "I knew that I was right. You were sharp, Mr. David Graham, but not sharp enough for me. At last you are run down."

David Graham turned a haggard face to the detective and asked:

"Tell me the truth, officer, did you not get your clue to my identity from a woman?"

The chief of detectives shrugged his shoulders and replied evasively:

"I obtained the clue myself."

"It matters little if I know the truth, as I shall soon meet sentence of death. You cannot refuse me the simple favor. Was it not Lucille Maynard who betrayed me?"

The officer hesitated a moment, and then made reply:

"It was."

David Graham turned a comprehensive look upon Jack Lever. The boy engineer, with a lump in his throat, came forward and grasped his manacled hands.

"Oh, Mr. Graham," he cried intensely, "you do not know how sorry I am for you. God above knows that if it was in my power to help you, I would risk my life. You have been a kind friend to me. I believe in you. I know that Lucille Maynard is a bad woman."

There was an expression upon David Graham's face which was terrible to see. Even the hardened officers of the law were impressed, and stood respectfully back for a moment.

"God bless you for such friendship, Jack Lever!" cried David Graham, in tones of deepest emotion.

"I will guard Arline forever! No harm shall come to her while I live—I swear it!"

CHAPTER VIII.—Villainy At Work.

Another tremendous sensation was created in Western City when the fearful news of David Graham's arrest was spread far and wide. The people were greatly excited, the newspapers con-

tained thrilling and revived accounts of the murder enacted in Denver so many years ago, and a great deal of praise was visited upon the detective who made the arrest. All was galling in the extreme to Jack Lever, who knew that Mr. Graham was an innocent man.

One night the express stood upon the side track, waiting orders to run down to the depot and take on its load of human freight. A great crowd was in waiting, and one more car than usual had been called into service. Jack Lever stood in the door of the cab, a handsome picture in the full glare of the signal light. At that moment the colored signal went up at the station, and Jack set the locomotive in motion, gliding quickly down to the station, where Mr. Ford was awaiting him with orders.

"All aboard," the conductor had finally shouted, and the people were crowding into the cars and messengers were hastily tossing their packages into the express car, when Jack saw four men coming across the station platform and carrying a heavy box between them. All of these men were armed, and as the box was put into the express car they leaped aboard also. All this was as plain as a printed book to Jack, and his face paled a trifle. A man stood near the car at that moment, whose face was concealed by a slouch hat. He made a peculiar signal with his hands which was caught up and repeated by a man at the other end of the platform. Jack gave a quick exclamation.

The box put aboard the car contained treasure, and the fact was known to the train robbers, this man of the slouch hat being no doubt a spy. Jack's eyes were on him like a hawk's, and he had in mind the purpose to leap down from the engine and have the fellow placed under arrest. But at that moment the starting gong was struck. It acted upon Jack Lever like magic. He could not disregard that call, and with a resolution of the sternest sort he opened the throttle and let Old Forty glide forward. Out of the station they went, and soon the express was flying over the rails at a terrific rate of speed. But they had not gone one hundred feet of the way when Jack Lever had turned to Bill Brandon and said, with white face and set lips:

"Bill, there is something up, and I think we are in for a scrimmage with the outlaws to-night. There is treasure aboard this train, and they are laying for it."

The stoker's face never changed expression as he replied:

"We'll put her through just the same."

"Ay!" cried Jack Lever bravely. "If we have to sell our lives to do it, we will put her through!"

CHAPTER IX.—A Thrilling Crisis.

Never in his life was the young engineer more deadly in earnest. Never before was he so completely absorbed with a pressure of impending evil. Although his fears were based upon what might have been termed trivial evidence, yet he felt positive that harm would befall the train that night unless something was done to avert it. What was worse than all else, the young engineer did not know nor could not guess exactly

what quarter this peril was to emanate from, or exactly what it was like. Neither had he been given time to communicate his impressions to the conductor of the train or anybody else except Bill Brandon. As a consequence, no preparation had been made to avert it, or discover the plot, and it was now too late to do so. To stop the train was impossible and might result in no good effect, rather alarming the passengers and warning the foe, if such were on board.

All this and much more flashed through Jack Lever's mind as he sat at the cab window and watched the track ahead in the glare of the headlight. As if to favor the train robbers in their purpose, the night came on as inky black as the fabled River Styx. Nothing could be seen further than the telegraph poles on either side, and ahead not beyond the headlight's circle. No better night could have been chosen for a train wreck, and Jack Lever experienced many a cold chill as he clung to the cab window, half fearing as they fled through each deep cut to see a railless roadbed or boulder-obstructed track ahead. It was a moment when the nerves of the pluckiest of men would be tried.

Unable to stand the strain further Jack asked the stoker to go over the tender to the first car and tell the conductor his fears. Brandon started out. Suddenly there came to the young engineer's ears what seemed like a distant yell. Instinctively Jack turned his head and beheld an awful sight. The rear of the tender and the car platform were yet enveloped in darkness. But the roof of the car was outlined against a somber sky, and Jack's heart stood still as he saw upon it the struggling figures of two men engaged in deadly strife. It was a sight to strike horror to the stoutest heart, and Jack Lever was almost petrified. At first he had imagined that it was Bill Brandon struggling with an enemy. It was impossible for the young engineer to go to the succor of either. All that he could do was to sit and watch the unequal contest. Unequal, for one seemed to have easy advantage of the other, until the swaying of a car round a curve lost that one his grip, when the situation changed. The man underneath leaped to his feet and shook off the other, and then with a wild, hoarse cry, darted forward and took a flying leap from the car roof. As he shot out into the air, the inky blackness on the car platform was broken by a dazzling flash, and the crack of firearms rang out. Whether the shots were fired with effect or not, they did not stay the downward course of the daring man, who struck on the top of the tender tank and was precipitated with much force over the coal, and thrown at full length upon the floor of the cab at Jack's feet.

All this had occupied the space of but a few moments. A terrible cry broke from Jack's lips, and he was about to bend down over the man when the latter, seeming to quickly recover, gained his feet. And then in the glare of the furnace light, Jack Lever was given a fearful shock. The man's face as thus revealed, white and horror-struck, was familiar to the young engineer, and he cried:

"My Heavens! It is Sylvester Raymond!"

It was indeed the victim of Lucille Maynard's vengeful spite—the man whom Jack had believed a victim of a harmless mania—Sylvester Raymond. To depict the situation adequately and the

sensations of Jack Lever, is beyond the power of the writer's pen. Sylvester Raymond clutched Jack's arm and cried hoarsely:

"We are lost! I tried to reach you—could not—got on rear end of train just in time—— Ah! what is that?"

There was a sudden shock, a grating of iron, and the locomotive shot forward like a bird just as Jack perceived with a thrill that they were severed from the train. Somebody on the car platform had undone the couplings, and before Jack could bring the lever back there was a space of one hundred yards between them and the train, which now came to a stop. To add to the horrors of the situation, the track between was now seen to be crowded with armed men.

CHAPTER X.—The Fight With the Outlaws.

To run Old Forty back to the train would be to seemingly commit suicide, though Jack seriously meditated the move. For the present he held the engine in check at a safe distance from the scene. The air was filled with the sounds of cracking pistols and wild shouts. Jack was curious to know what had become of Bill Brandon, and accordingly turned to Sylvester Raymond.

"Did you see my mate?" he asked.

Jack nearly fainted with the force of the reply.

"He is dead!" replied Raymond.

"Dead!" gasped the young engineer, in a hoarse voice. "My soul! Bill Brandon dead?" Then he asked almost rudely: "How do you know that?"

I saw them stab him and throw him off the train."

Jack was sick and faint with awful horror.

"Poor Bill," he exclaimed in hollow tones. "Where were you when all this was done?"

"On top of the mail car."

"What!" exclaimed Jack. "How came you there?"

"That will necessitate my giving you my story," replied Sylvester Raymond. "Just as the train was leaving Western City, I overheard a part of the plot, and saw Black Jose, in a disguise, and his mother, Lucille Maynard, board the train. At that moment the train started, and I had but just time to get on the rear end of the car.

"I was, therefore, given no time to spread an alarm, so resolved to do what I could alone. I was obliged to proceed with caution, as there were many of the robbers in disguise on board.

"I had an inkling of the plot to uncouple the cars, but to make sure of this, and also to plan the defeat of the game, I ventured to climb on top of the mail car at the risk of my life, and crept forward to the end, where I could see the rascals below.

"It was at that moment that Brandon was murdered. I had no weapon, or I would have shot the villains at once, and had made up my mind to go back and alarm the train, when I was attacked from behind. It seemed that one of the gang had been watching me, and followed me to the top of the car. You know the rest."

Jack's feelings were of a varied sort as he listened to this narrative of Sylvester Raymond. He saw that fate itself had lent aid to the outlaws in their plans.

"We must do something!" he cried excitedly. "It is wrong to remain inactive here."

"How far is it to the next station?" asked Mr. Raymond.

"But two miles to Apache," replied Jack. "But we could not get aid there at this time of night. The station beyond that is twenty miles distant. It would require an hour to go there and back with relief, by which time the outlaws must have gained their plunder and made good an escape."

"Then that plan is impracticable," agreed Sylvester Raymond. "There is but one other."

"What is that?"

"Back up to the train and endeavor to recouple it to the locomotive."

Jack Lever's eyes burned with a strange light of determination. He was irresolute but a moment. Then he turned to Mr. Raymond.

"I believe you are a man of nerve," he said. "Do you know how to handle a locomotive?"

"I think I could run one," said Mr. Raymond in reply. "I was educated in mechanical engineering, and at that time was thoroughly familiar with locomotives."

"Will you stand by me in a venturesome move?"

"Yes."

Jack hastily explained to Mr. Raymond the working of the throttle and lever, and then opening the valve, started Old Forty at a lively rate back down the track. In the top of Old Forty's cab the young engineer, anticipating the need of such, had but a few weeks before caused hooks to be placed, and from these a couple of repeating rifles hung. Down the track went the locomotive at a rapid speed. At sight of it returning a loud yell went up from the outlaws, who had not counted upon such a daring move. A fusillade of bullets was directed at the cab, and Mr. Raymond was obliged to crouch in the bottom of the cab to avoid being riddled. Jack Lever now seized both the rifles, and, creeping over the coal, gained the water-tank. By this time the locomotive was within twenty yards of the train. The men in the express car seeing the locomotive returning, were incited to fresh courage, and returned the fire of the outlaws with interest. Signaling Mr. Raymond to slow the locomotive, Jack sighted his rifle over the heap of coal and then pulled the trigger. It was good for sixteen rapid shots, and a perfect fusillade was poured into the midst of the outlaws. Half a dozen men with ordinary rifles on board the locomotive could not have been more effective. The outlaws were astounded at such a reception, and became for the moment panic-stricken.

CHAPTER XI.—A Daring Act.

Jack saw that his time had come. Quick as a flash he signaled to Mr. Raymond, and then boldly swung himself over the end of the tender and down upon the coupler buffer. Here he was for a moment exposed to the enemy's fire. But the locomotive quickly glided up to the end of the car, and Jack sprang for the lever. In less time than it takes to tell it, he had coupled the train to the locomotive and let fly the brake set by the train robbers.

In the same instant Mr. Raymond, hearing the rattling of the brake, let the throttle open, and

Old Forty plunged forward, the train moved, and in another moment was under way. A wild, baffled yell from the train robbers rang out upon the air, and the windows of the train were riddled with a shower of bullets. But the battle was lost to them, and the express was soon speeding away over the rails at a fifty-mile rate of speed, having been detained just forty minutes in Apache Pass. Upon the car steps were four dead bodies of the outlaws, and Jack paused a moment in the vague hope that Bill Brandon might be among them. But he was not there.

Jack now burst into the mail car, and found that two clerks, armed with revolvers, were its only defenders. The four men armed with Winchester were yet in the express car. The cars had all been literally riddled with bullets, and upon one side of the train there was not a pane of whole glass left. The frightened passengers, such as were not armed, were crouched under the seats, and, strange to say, not one had suffered a scratch from the conflict. The only fatality was the case of Bill Brandon. It was a victory to be proud of, and Jack left all congratulating themselves in a wildly enthusiastic manner to return to the engine. There he found Mr. Raymond quite skilfully filling the post of engineer. Of this duty Jack promptly released him, and they shook hands over the great victory, which was certainly due in the main to their plucky work. The train met with no further mishap, and Jack made extra speed enough to partly wipe out the delay, so that they were only thirty minutes late at the end of the journey.

When the express returned in the early morning hours it carried a special carload of vigilants. But the outlaws did not await the return, and when the train reached Apache Pass the only trace of the conflict was a number of patches of blood upon the sleepers and rails, and the footprints of a large body of men. The vigilants here left the train to take the trail, though their efforts were not afterward rewarded with success. A little way further on poor Bill Brandon's body was picked up, and Jack wept sadly over the fate of one who had been a dear companion and stanch friend. When the train reached Western City, a great crowd was at the depot to welcome it, for the news of the battle had long since reached the border city. The excitement was intense and once more Jack Lever's name was coupled with a heroic deed.

He was accorded an ovation, and with difficulty tore himself away from a legion of friends. As he finally succeeded in getting away he was joined by Sylvester Raymond, who in tones of some emotion said:

"Jack Lever, I have long desired an opportunity to talk with you. Will you grant me that favor?"

"My dear friend," replied the young engineer, "I can refuse you nothing. I am at your command."

"Then come with me," said the eccentric traveler. "Ah, my heart prophesies that I am at last to be rewarded with the great joy of success in my life undertaking."

Jack was astonished at his words, but deigning no reply, accompanied him. They proceeded to the Western Hotel, and to Mr. Raymond's apartments.

Now, Jack Lever," said Mr. Raymond, seating himself opposite the young engineer, "I want you to tell me as much as you can of your life history. How do you come to bear the name of Jack Lever?"

"I will gladly do that," replied Jack, and forthwith gave the story of his life as it was known to him. Mr. Raymond listened, and when Jack had finished arose and paced the floor for a moment. He was deadly pale, and trembling in every limb.

"I have told you my sad story," he said finally, "of how I lost my baby boy—stolen by my arch enemy, as I believe?"

"Well, Jack Lever," said he impressively, "for twenty years I have searched in vain. At last, however, I am blessed with success, for, in the sight of God, I believe you are my lost boy."

CHAPTER XII.—On the Track of the Abductors.

"You!" exclaimed Jack Lever, in a strange, husky voice. Then each stood there with clasped hands and gazing deep into the eyes of the other. What strange, subtle perception accorded them the joyful truth? Though neither had a single fact to offer as a proof, yet through the frame of each was coursing like an electric current the feeling that it was the truth. This sensation had come over Jack Lever all in a moment and all unconscious of surroundings he was murmuring in a charmed way:

"My father!"

For some while they stood thus, and then mutely embraced. Then Jack Lever recovered himself.

"If you are not my father in reality, then he could not seem dearer to me than you."

Jack Lever in his heart felt that this old man was more to him than other men. He knew that instinctively he could regard him with full acceptance as his father. If he was not such, what near relation other than this could he bear, for the young engineer felt sure of kinship of some sort. Again each went over the past, raking all matters up which it was believed might evolve a clue, and many times they clasped hands, and avowed sincere belief in the near and dear tie of father and son. But the interview could not last forever, and at last Jack took his leave, saying:

"Life now presents to me a different hue. I have a great end to labor for and that is to secure undoubted proof that I am your son. Come to me when you can. You are assured of my deepest affection, my father, for such I shall regard you."

Thus they parted. That moment Jack Lever never forgot, and he went forth from the Western Hotel that day altered in many respects. It marked a turning point in his life, for that very hour, as it were, he entered upon a new career, the evolution of circumstances, stranger and more terrible than he had dreamed of. Jack went home and retired, to remain in a wakeful state through the night, pondering continually over the mystery of his life.

When morning came he arose haggard and troubled in mind, though withal there was a certain delirious sense of delight in the thought that he had found his father. An hour after rising he

went down to the round-house, and with his own hands fastened the mourning crepe upon Old Forty for the loss of brave Bill Brandon. The funeral was to take place that day, and many of the railroad men were to attend. It chanced that in looking over the locomotive Jack discovered a flaw in one of the steel bearings which rendered most perilous the making use of the engine. He at once dispatched word to Mr. Ford, and the master mechanic employed by the railroad came up and made an examination. "It will take three days to adjust a new bearing," he declared. "For that length of time, Mr. Jack Lever, you will be out of a job."

Jack experienced a thrill, partly of pleasure. He was by no means averse to an enjoined vacation, for there was much work which he would like to do outside. So he suffered Old Forty to go to the repair shop without the least bit of compunction. That afternoon he attended Bill Brandon's funeral, and in the evening had partly matured a daring plan, when he received a letter from Mr. David Graham, now in the Denver prison.

"My dear Jack," the letter read, "I know not who else to appeal to, but God will bless you if you can succeed in rescuing my Arline. I care not what becomes of me if she is saved. Rescue her, and win the dying blessing of your friend,
"DAVID GRAHAM."

It needed not the incentive of this letter to spur Jack on to the accomplishment of a purpose which had not for a moment been absent from his mind. Now the opportunity and time was afforded him to act, and he had already formulated a plan. His whole soul was fired anew. Vigilants and detectives had long been searching for Arline Graham. But not a trace of her had been found. He was standing at a street corner when in the crowd he chanced to catch a glimpse of one woman whose appearance impressed him curiously. He rubbed his eyes, and, looking again, exclaimed:

"Well, if it isn't Lucille Maynard!"

This discovery was succeeded by a shock of surprise at the woman's audacity in venturing to appear upon the streets in Western City. To be sure, she was disguised, but this was easily penetrated. The young engineer watched her a moment with interest.

It was his first impulse to arrest her, but second thought disposed of this idea. The brilliant scheme occurred to him of playing detective and following her, and this he proceeded to do. Darkness was fast settling down over the border city. Soon the shadows were so thick that the store windows flashed forth their light, and the street lamps were lit. Up one street and down another Jack followed the woman. He was just beginning to wonder what would be the ending of the chase, when suddenly Lucille halted a moment before the door of a saloon, and a man came out and joined her. Together they turned into an unfrequented by-street, and stood beneath a large tree which filled the locality with the blackest of shadows. Jack Lever had never seen the man before, but guessing that he was one of the outlaw gang, managed to creep up behind them on the other side of the tree, and where he could overhear their conversation with ease.

CHAPTER XIII.—Jack Is Accorded a Revelation.

Jack Lever at the moment had no idea of the mighty importance to him of the conversation which he was about to overhear. He experienced no qualms of conscience at thus playing the eavesdropper upon these parties. His only fear was that of discovery. He crouched closely against the tree-box, and caught every word uttered, though the conversation was conducted in an undertone.

"It is a very easy job for you, Jake Hart, and you will make well out of it," Lucille was saying in her musical voice. "You are a fool if you do not grasp the chance."

"It is risky," replied the other, who was addressed as Jake Hart. The young engineer saw that he was a young man of about his own age.

"Risk!" echoed Lucille scornfully. "There is risk in anything. Where is your pluck?"

"I am not so much afraid of arrest as I am of making a blunder," asserted Hart.

"You can follow my directions, can't you?" asked Lucille sharply.

"I suppose so."

"That is all that is necessary then. You are an orphan, Jake Hart, and the people who brought you up are both dead. Is not that so?"

"It is."

"Then you are just the person for the undertaking. You are merely to step forward and claim the old man's money after his death. You are his kidnapped son, do you see?"

"Yes."

"You can prove that much. Next, I will give you baby clothes and jewelry which the real child wore, and with them you can establish your identity. Then you will of course claim the property and we will divide. It will be a big haul, for Sylvester Raymond is a very rich man."

"Sylvester Raymond!"

Jack Lever mentally repeated the name, and his knees grew weak under him. Here was a most stupendous plot luckily revealed to him, and he could hardly contain himself for excitement. At the same moment he experienced a feeling of intense repugnance for this evil, scheming woman. And when he thought of the possibility that these same baby clothes and jewels which this woman kidnapper claimed to possess might have been his own once, his blood fairly boiled. He could with difficulty restrain himself from springing forth and denouncing her. It was proved now beyond all doubt that Lucille Maynard was the kidnapper.

Inwardly Jack congratulated himself upon this bit of good luck in overhearing the plot. He quite thoroughly understood the situation now. This young man, Jake Hart, was possessed of a clouded infancy like himself. It would not be at all difficult for him to prove an heirship with the proof which Lucille had mentioned.

"It looks plausible," agreed young Hart, as Lucille finished speaking. "Of course I will take hold of the job. I shall expect your help. But tell me the truth, is the true heir living?"

Lucille hesitated. As for Jack Lever, he strained his every sense of hearing.

"What is that to you?"

"I have a little curiosity to know," said Hart carelessly.

"Well, then, I will tell you—yes, he is alive, and more than that, in this town to-day. I will wager that you cannot guess who he is."

"He is a young engineer on the Southwest Pacific, and his name is Jack Lever."

Jack gave an involuntary gasp and clutched at the bark of the tree for support. The revelation was to him a mighty joy.

"You have guessed right," said Lucille Maynard. "Now, God help you if you betray me, Jake Hart!"

"Enough of that," said Hart impatiently. "Now that I know this much, Lucille, you can tell me, of course, when you kidnapped the kid, and how?"

"It was an act of revenge," declared the woman. "Sylvester Raymond incurred my hatred, and I stole away the child to grind his proud heart and humble his soul. It has cursed him with a life of sorrow. Yet you see I am not satisfied, and now want his fortune."

"The boy was stolen by me, and I gave him in charge of my husband, Ike Maynard. He started South to escape the detectives, together with a nurse whom we had employed to care for the brat."

"The reason we did not strangle it, and so end all trouble was that I had intended bringing the boy up to a life of rascality, and then sending him home to his father as the sweetest sort of revenge I could desire. But an accident on the railroad occurred, and when I came down here, Ike and the nurse were burned to ashes in the car wreck, and the baby was in the care of the railroad people."

"I did not care to take the brat in charge, so it was brought up by old Mother Gregory, and to-day is Jack Lever, the boy engineer. Ha, ha! If old Raymond only knew the truth—but he never will, nor nobody else. Listen, Jake Hart! If you betray me now—God help you!"

The reader can imagine the effect of all this upon Jack Lever. He was so intensely excited that he was hardly able to restrain himself from declaring himself to the scheming woman, and denouncing her.

"Humph!" grunted Jake Hart. "You are not a comfortable sort of enemy to have, are you? There is that poor Graham, who is as innocent of that murder as I am. He will stretch hemp."

"Good enough for him," gritted the ex-circus rider. "He tried to defeat me, and my revenge is complete. It is a victory par excellence. The fair Petite Arline is to wed my son Jose before many days. David Graham's daughter an outlaw's bride. Ha, ha, ha! That is the sweetest revenge of all. Oh, I can die with the sweet consciousness of having triumphed over all my foes."

Jack Lever's brain was at bursting-point. The woman's laugh penetrated it like a keen knife, and unable longer to restrain himself, he sprang out and faced the pair of schemers with an anger and indignation warranted by sensible wrong.

"At last you are betrayed, Lucille Maynard!" he cried triumphantly. "You have showed your hand, and your end has come."

CHAPTER XIV.—Outwitted.

With Jack Lever's sudden appearance on the scene Jake Hart gave a startled cry and fled from

the spot. Jack did not pursue him. His business was with the woman. For a moment it was plain that Lucille was discomposed. She started back with ashen pale face, and an ejaculation of dismay broke from her lips.

"The fiends have done this!" she exclaimed. "You here, Jack Lever!"

The woman's right hand was raised suddenly, and in it glittered a revolver. It covered the young engineer quite effectually and gave him a start. He knew well the base revengeful nature of the woman. It would be death to advance upon that revolver.

"I hold your life in my hands, Jack Lever," she said hoarsely. "And I must now give you fair warning. Do not cross my path, for if you do, death will be your certain portion. Don't forget it."

With the weapon still covering the young engineer, she began to retreat backwards. The position of the young engineer was an awkward one. He was always brave and daring, but never foolhardy. He knew the folly of throwing away his life in that spot, and also reflected that after all little was to be gained by causing her arrest. He allowed the woman to retreat to the corner of the street, around which she suddenly vanished. Then he aroused himself as if from a dream.

"I have certainly pursued an unwise course," he muttered, as he strode away in an opposite direction. "I will be more discreet in the future, and the next time I face you, Lucille Maynard, I will have ample proof of your guilt."

With this stern resolution he set out for the Western Hotel with the object in view of seeing his father and telling him all. He remembered Lucille's declaration that she had the baby clothes and the evidence of his identity. With these in her possession there was little chance that Jack could fully prove his claim. He reached the hotel, and at once went to Sylvester Raymond's room. Jack found him engaged in writing letters. He listened to Jack's account with deepest interest, and then embracing him again, said in a voice of fulsome gladness:

"I knew that you were my lost boy, Jack Lever, even before I heard this absolute evidence. I can scarcely bear to have you leave my side, even for a moment. Yes, we have much to fear from that woman, Jack, but time and Providence will enable us to defeat her yet. You acted wisely in permitting her to go free. Evil deeds, such as she fosters, will soon weave a rope to hang the evildoer."

"What would you advise me to do, father?" asked Jack.

"So far as the woman is concerned, you can do nothing," replied Mr. Raymond. "Meanwhile, I shall erect a bulwark which her plans cannot overthrow. While I have not the evidence to prove you my son, I shall take measures to adopt you in law and make you my heir. This will thwart her scheme with Jake Hart. The baby clothes will be of little use to Mrs. Maynard then. As long as we know the joyful truth of our relationship, we need care little for the ignorance of other people in the matter."

Jack stayed some while longer with his father, and then, leaving the hotel, made a call upon Captain Foster, of the vigilantes. The latter announced his willingness to organize his men, one

hundred strong, and scour the Apache Hills on the following day. They would go, he declared, with the determination of ferreting out Black Jose at any cost.

"And we will succeed," declared Jack Lever resolutely.

A moment later he was upon the street and making his way with rapid strides homeward. But the night's work was not yet over. Jack was just turning the corner of an unfrequented street when he narrowly escaped collision with a man whose face was partly muffled. It was Jake Hart.

CHAPTER XV.—At the Red Bridge.

In spite of the attempted concealment of his features, Jack recognized the young villain. Instantly his whole being was fired. He sprang forward like a panther, and seized hold of Hart, who struggled ineffectually to get away.

"I have caught you, scoundrel!" cried the young engineer, holding the wretch in a grip of steel. "You cannot get away. It is quite useless to struggle."

"I don't want to get away," growled Hart. "What are you trying to do, anyway? Let go of me, I tell you!"

"You scheming wretch," gritted Jack, giving him a sudden swing which made the villain giddy. "You can't play any game on me. I heard your whole nefarious plot with Lucille Maynard."

Hart trembled violently, but stubbornly maintained his point, much to Jack's anger and disgust.

"I don't know you, nor don't know what you mean," he asserted boldly. "If you do not let go of me I shall appeal to an officer, and have you arrested."

"Look here, Jake Hart," said the young engineer forcibly. "It will avail you nothing to prevaricate. You know that I am aware of your game. Sylvester Raymond is my father, and Lucille Maynard has in her possession the necessary proof of this. She is a sharp, tricky woman, and is only endeavoring to make use of you to further her own ends. Mark my words, she will defraud you of that which she promises."

"Lucille has been a good friend to me thus far," he declared.

"For a very good reason. She has not done with you yet. Admitted that your scheme might succeed, Jake Hart, and at my father's death you might step forward and usurp my place, would the wealth thus acquired prove to be of benefit to you? Even if Lucille Maynard allowed you to retain one dollar of it, there would be a curse attached to it."

The young villain trembled violently.

"I have not yet decided to enter into the scheme," he said desperately.

"Can you not see the injustice of Lucille Maynard's scheme, Hart?" cried Jack eagerly. "You would not be doing right, neither by me nor yourself. She will only make a fool of you. Take the warning. Let Lucille alone, and my father and I will make it richly worth while for you to serve us."

"In what manner could I help you?" asked Hart, pretending deep interest, though there was a cunning gleam in his eyes.

"Well, I will tell you," said Jack eagerly. "You know the woman has the baby clothes and jewelry of the kidnapped child of Sylvester Raymond in her possession?"

"Yes."

"I want those things, which are proofs of my identity, without her sworn confession. You understand?"

"I do."

"You can get them for me?"

"Yes, I can."

"When you bring those articles to me I will see that you are rewarded."

Well," said Hart slowly, "I think we will call it a trade. I will be in the city for some days yet, and if I can get those articles from Lucille I will let you know."

"Good!" cried Jack joyfully. "You can easily find me at the round-house. Come to me at as early a date as possible. Now give me your word on this, Jake Hart."

They clasped hands, and the young villain replied, with feigned sincerity:

"You can bet that I do. It is all settled. Let your mind be easy."

Jack was not just satisfied in his inner mind of the fellow's sincerity. But under the circumstances he could do nothing but accept his word for it. Therefore, after a few more repeated injunctions he parted company with him, and once more started on his homeward way. It was now past the midnight hour. It was a pitchy, dark night, and Jack's way led through a lonely part of the city's suburbs. He was approaching a dashing torrent in a deep and dangerous gorge, bridged by an iron structure one hundred feet or more in length. As Jack drew nearer, and heard the roar of the river, he was surprised at the presence of no lights upon the bridge. This was an unusual thing upon so dark a night, and dangerous withal for foot-travelers, for the approach to the Red Bridge, as it was called, was not oversafe in daylight.

This was Jack's first intimation of the awful tragedy which the night was destined to record. Even the absence of the lights were not associated in his mind with anything criminal. But as the young engineer drew nearer, he was rewarded with the sound of human voices high pitched in serious altercation. Some persons were on the bridge evidently engaged in a quarrel. The voices were succeeded by the sound of a scuffle and dull, sudden blows, followed by a fearful, anguished cry, which sent the blood in tingling currents through Jack Lever's veins.

"Help! Oh, my God! I am lost!"

It was an awful dying cry in a man's voice. It swept forth on the night air with wailing, agonized volume, and was testimony that foul play was being enacted. This was enough for brave Jack Lever. With every nerve strained to the highest tension, the young engineer sprang forward and plunged into the darkness of the bridge, hoping to avert the tragedy.

breast, and that was to prevent a crime. He knew that murder was being enacted. There was no mistaking the despairing accents of the voice. His only fear was that he might be too late.

Toward the center of the bridge he sprang, but his feet had scarcely met the timbers when there was a swaying of the iron railing, and then a fearful splash of a heavy object in the waters of the river fifty feet below. Retreating footsteps now resounded, and Jack, in the gloom saw two men running rapidly away. Rushing after them at full speed, the young engineer cried forcibly:

"Stop, you scoundrels, or I will shoot you!"

This latter threat was idle, as Jack had no pistol, but he fancied that it might have some effect upon the flying men. The reply was a savage cry, and a moment later the crack of a pistol rang out, and a bullet whistled past Jack's ear. It was a close call, but did not check the daring young engineer's speed. Another shot was fired, and then Jack saw the men spring upon the backs of a couple of horses tethered a few yards further on, and dash away at full speed. Further pursuit was out of the question. Jack came to a halt now, and for an instant was undecided how to act. Then he made a straight line for the nearest house, and pounding upon the closed doors, called up from their sleep a farmer named Briggs and his two boys as well.

"What is wanted?" asked the farmer, putting his head out of an upper window. "Is it a fire?"

"Worse than that—a murder."

The window went down with a bang, and it is needless to say that the farmer and his boys consumed but little time in dressing and joining the young engineer. Together they started for the Red Bridge. Lanterns were procured, and the bridge lamps were relit. This enabled them to examine the spot where the scuffle had taken place with much minuteness. A terrible truth was revealed. Upon the planking was a pool of blood, and the railing was swayed and bent. No clearer evidence of a tragedy was needed than this.

Pursuit at that hour was hardly feasible, and to arouse the vigilants Jack knew would dispose of his plans for the next day. He was fully confident that the assassins were members of the train-robbing gang, and in this event, with the early morning he would in any case be upon their track with Captain Foster's men. There was little use in alarming the town at that hour. To report to the authorities the next morning would, he believed, be the most sensible move. So it was agreed to let the matter rest until the morrow, when the river might be dragged. With this understanding Jack took leave of Farmer Briggs and his boys, and going home, went to bed, much wearied with the day's events.

Jack slept soundly, and it was after sunrise when he awoke. He arose and, dressing himself quickly, went down to breakfast and then without further preparation started to join Captain Foster and his men. But on his way to the appointed place it occurred to him that he had not advised his father of his plans for the day, and decided to make a brief call upon him for that purpose. It was near the hour of nine when he entered the Western Hotel and went directly to Sylvester Raymond's room. A servant stood by the door.

CHAPTER XVI.—A Dark Deed.

Jack Lever had no thought of fear when he dashed upon the Red Bridge in answer to the cry for help. But one impulse was uppermost in his

"Mr. Raymond is not in, sir," he said respectfully to Jack. "He went out about twelve last night, and he has not come back."

At first thought, Jack attached no significance to this. He was about to turn away when the man coughed and exclaimed in a doubtful manner:

"Ahem! if you please, sir—it is a little strange, sir, but Mr. Raymond has not come back, and—maybe it is all right, sir, but I fear something wrong."

If Jack had been stricken with a bullet he could not have received a quicker, more sudden shock.

"Something wrong, did you say? What do you mean? Where did Mr. Raymond go? Tell me, quickly."

"I do not know, sir," replied the man nervously, "but a message came here for him at twelve, and he went out very quickly."

Jack saw a paper in the man's fingers, and exclaimed:

"Let me see it."

Without a word the servant gave it to him.

"Dear Sir.—I have an important revelation to make to you. It concerns the whereabouts and identity of your kidnapped child. I can tell you all about him, and where to find him. I am waiting to see you at the Red Bridge. Come there without delay.
A Friend."

The letter fell from Jack Lever's nerveless grasp, and he sank in a heap to the floor.

CHAPTER XVII.—On the Track.

An awful faintness, the effects of a crushing deadly realization had overpowered Jack Lever. Then he recovered himself, with a sternly defined resolution for revenge uppermost in his mind. Nothing should balk him in this. If it took years to accomplish the end, he would never desist. It should be the central aim of his life. He left the hotel quickly, and set out for the square where the vigilants were forming. Captain Foster saw Jack approaching, and came forward to meet him.

"We are quite ready, Jack," he declared cheerily. "All the boys have sworn not to return until Black Jose and his gang are rooted out. Why—what's up?"

The vigilant captain regarded Jack's white, agonized face with astonishment.

"A terrible crime was committed at the Red Bridge last night. We must give our first attention to that."

And with this Captain Foster and his men listened with horror to the story of the Red Bridge catastrophe. Jack had hardly finished when Captain Foster cried:

"There is work for us there, boys. We must find the body first before we leave Western City. Then we will find the assassins, and they shall hang before to-morrow morning upon the first tree. What say you all?"

"Ay, ay!" replied the men in a chorus. "We are with you, captain!"

"We have a horse here for you, Jack Lever," declared Captain Foster. "Mount and come with us."

Jack lost no time in springing into the saddle,

and rode away for the Red Bridge. In an almost incredible space of time, the news of the tragedy had spread over the entire town, and before the hour of noon, nearly the whole population had gathered at the scene to join in the search. Boats were procured and men dragged the bed of the stream for a long time ineffectually. But finally a shout went up from one party, and they soon had brought to the shore the body of a man. Stretched out upon the green sward, it required but a glance from those who knew him to identify Sylvester Raymond. Jack flung himself upon the body of his father in a transport of grief. Later the body was removed to the Western Hotel. The coroner's verdict was murder, and the body was held in his charge to await results of further investigation. And, while the detectives were at work and the people in a state of ferment over the affair, Jack Lever and the vigilants were on their way to the Apache Hills to the rescue of Arline Graham.

They had entered the hills at the close of day, and Jack and Captain Foster were riding a trifle in advance, when a man suddenly sprang out of a thicket and threw himself in front of the cavalcade. He was a tough-looking specimen, a species of half-breed, and he flung his arms over his head wildly, shouting:

"Stop, stop! It is death to go further!"

"Injun John!" exclaimed the captain of the vigilants. "What is he doing here?"

"You know him, then?" asked Jack.

"Yes."

"What does he want?"

Injun John, as Captain Foster had called the half-breed, now advanced with excited manner.

"Well, John, what do you want?" asked Captain Foster impatiently. "Talk English if you expect us to understand you."

The half-breed at once ceased his gibberish, and coming to the captain's side lowered his voice and said earnestly.

"Go no funder, white man. Killee all in bushes. All hide, shoot you when go by. See?"

The halfbred stated that the outlaws were in ambush farther on, and pretended to be an enemy of the leader and wished to outwit them, if the vigilants would trust to him.

Injun John then told Captain Foster he would take them where they wanted to go by a safe route and thus fool the outlaws. The vigilant captain, not suspecting any treachery, complied. After riding at the head of the posse for some distance, all of a sudden Injun John spurred his horse up and rode out of sight around a point of rock.

"What is the Injun up to?" asked Captain Foster sharply.

"He has skipped out."

"Injun tricks," commented several, and startled glances were exchanged. Every man's hand sought his rifle trigger, and synonymous with the suspicion came the instant and startling realization that they had been cleverly duped. It was a clever device to entrap the invaders. Injun John was in league with the outlaws, as a sharp volley of rifle-balls from the woods above, which emptied three saddles, now attested.

There was no time for useless talk now. Action was what was needed, and none were quick-

er to grasp the situation than Captain Foster. The order to charge ran back along the line, and forward pressed the brave band. Jack Lever's young blood was fired with the spirit of battle, and such a thing as fear did not enter his mind. Foremost of all he plunged the spurs into his horse and rode straight on through the deep defile. The outlaws could be seen now swarming over the heights above, beyond, and even behind the little band of vigilants.

Bullets flew as thick as rain and at the moment the vigilants were hardly able to return the fire. The only chance for preservation lay in pushing straight ahead through the defile. It was a charge almost equal to the charge of the memorable Six Hundred. It was literally into the jaws of death. Men were falling from their saddles rapidly and still there seemed no end to the dread defile. But it came at last, and the mere handful of men left from that terrible ride rode out upon a level plateau, and forming in line of battle, charged back upon the flank of the foe.

This time the advantage was in their favor and making the woods with a scathing fire, they drove the outlaws from their position, and scattered them. The fight now became desultory and scattered, and the vantage was about even. Jack Lever had been foremost in the charge, but now his horse became unmanageable through the breaking of a bridle rein, and he was carried at headlong speed down a deep descent, and brought with the horse in a heap at the foot of a high canyon wall.

Fortunately unhurt, Jack picked himself up only to become a participant in a thrilling scene. Around a corner of the irregular canyon wall two flying forms came swiftly into view, and a feminine shriek arose upon the air. The first was a young girl, terrified and wildly beautiful, and her pursuer was one of the outlaws. It needed but a single glance to accord Jack Lever the whole startling truth. The young girl was Petite Arline, the pride of the circus, and the pursuer was no other than the outlaw chief, Black Jose himself.

CHAPTER XVIII.—The Rescue.

Jack's heart gave a wild leap and the blood tingled like fire in his veins. He could not for a moment act, so surprised was he. Arline, pallid and imbued with a desperate terror, caught sight of the young engineer and came toward him. The outlaw chief was overtaking her with long strides, and would have placed a grip upon her, but Jack Lever, like a young lion, flung himself in the path of Black Jose. They stood face to face, two most deadly sworn foes. The expression upon Black Jose's swarthy visage was fierce, dark and vengeful.

"Caramba!" he exclaimed sharply, with a hiss. "It is you, Jack Lever?"

"Then you know me," said Jack coolly.

"I have heard of you."

"Well, what have you to say? I find you playing the part of a cur and pursuing a helpless young girl."

"She is mine," said the crafty villain, with a hiss.

"You shall give up the girl or fight me."

The Mexican felt of his belt, and his face turned an ashen gray. He had not a weapon of any kind, while Jack was fully armed. The young engineer smiled with some satisfaction.

"It looks as if the scales were in my favor, Jose," he exclaimed. "You are certainly at my mercy."

The villain looked as though he would like to beat a retreat, but a glance at Jack's revolver settled his mind upon that question. He therefore only crouched back with a livid pallor upon his face. Jack regarded him a moment with contempt.

"I have heard it said, Black Jose, that you were a brave man," he said, with scathing irony. "Were I in your position I fear you would hold the vantage. But I am not that kind of a man. I want nothing that I do not gain fairly. I shall give you a chance for your life."

Before Black Jose could recover from his astonishment, Jack had divested himself of his belt and weapons, and, throwing off his jacket, stood unarmed.

"I am as you are now, Jose Sereno," he exclaimed. "We are upon even terms."

The Mexican seemed to arouse as from a spell. The crafty light left his eyes and a strange gleam emanated from them.

"The American boy is brave!" he said. "He is fair. I will not fight him, but surrender. Black Jose is not a coward, and is not afraid to die."

"I accept your surrender, and you will admit that I have not vanquished you unfairly," said Jack.

"I will admit that," declared the prisoner.

Without making a move to bind the outlaw chief, Jack turned to Arline, who crept shivering but gladly into his arms.

"You are safe!" cried Jack joyfully, as he embraced her. "Oh, Arline, you do not know what my thoughts of your fate have been since you were abducted that eventful night."

"And you cannot know how I have prayed for your coming, Jack," she replied, shyly but earnestly.

"Heaven be praised, the trial is all over now and we are reunited."

At this moment half a dozen of the vigilants came up and Jack gave his prisoner, Black Jose, into their care. The Mexican outlaw was taken away, and the young engineer, now turning to Arline, drew her to a seat upon a ledge of rock and said:

"Now, Arline, tell me your story."

"After I was seized by the ruffians that night in the tent I was brought here into these hills and shut up in a cave which is not far from here. The door of my prison cell was made of bars of iron, and these I could not break. But fortunately to-day I was set free——"

"By whom, pray?"

"I will tell you. I knew that some great event was at hand this morning when I saw the outlaws cleaning their weapons, and I managed to overhear enough to satisfy me that a relief party was coming into the hills to-day."

"You can imagine my joyful feelings, and when the outlaws marched away from the cave I prayed fervently that they might be defeated. My prayer has been granted. I was chafing in

my prison cell and counting the minutes, which seemed hours, when I received a great surprise. I heard a voice, and, looking up, saw a woman standing in the open door. It was Lucille Maynard.

"Her face was chalky white and her manner very weak and exhausted. She beckoned to me and said:

"Arline, I know I've done wrong by you, and I'd like to make up for it. I am not long for this world now, for death is upon me. I want you to go and find Jack Lever just as quick as you can. Bring him here to me before I die!"

"What!" cried Jack, unable to longer control himself. "Do you mean to say that Lucille Maynard is dying?"

"Yes," replied Arline.

"And has sent for me?"

"Even so."

"My God! She has some important confession to make. I must lose no time. Can you take me to her, Arline?"

"Yes, but the outlaws——"

"They will not return. Captain Foster already has them corraled. Stay! You shall give me the rest of your story."

"It is of little importance," replied Arline. "Glad to avail myself of my liberty, I crept out of the cave, and was making good my escape when Black Jose came upon me. You know the rest."

"Yes, yes. Now for the cave. Oh, how I hope that my belief may be verified."

While Arline indicated the path, Jack, with one arm about her waist, to assist her over the rough places, set out hurriedly for the outlaws' cavern. His brain was a chaos of doubts and fears and vague possibilities. There was a prophetic sense of a brighter day uppermost in his mind.

CHAPTER XIX.—Rifting of the Clouds.

Through a narrow gorge, and turning to the right along the brow of a mighty precipice, Arline led the way. Here was a beaten path marked with the hoofs of horses, and then they emerged into a semi-circular dell, deep among the mountain crags. This retreat of the outlaws was practically inaccessible, save by the path and a spot well suited by nature to resist an attack. Twenty men in the narrow path could hold a hundred at bay. A deep-mouthed cavern yawned in front of them, and into this Jack followed Arline. The cavern was adorned with all the paraphernalia of the outlaw band, and was a typical robbers' retreat. Upon the floor at one side, and with a pile of skins for a couch, reclined a woman's form. She was the only occupant of the place. Jack sprang forward and knelt over her.

"Lucille Maynard!" he exclaimed.

The woman gave an eager start, and, opening her eyes, already filming with death, she gasped with an accent of pleasure:

"Jack Lever! My prayer is answered."

In spite of his knowledge of the woman's wickedness, Jack experienced a thrill of pity for her as she lay there stricken with death.

"I sent for you—Arline—she found you," articulated the dying woman.

"Yes," she found me," replied Jack.

"God be praised; Jack Lever, I am going to die."

At this moment a couple of the vigilants entered the cavern. They halted at sight of Jack Lever, who, however, beckoned them to come nearer. They obeyed and stood over the dying woman.

"I am ready to take and execute your dying bequests, Lucille Maynard," said Jack, as he bent down over her.

"Lift me up a little. Let me see the light of day once more. There! That will do. Now I will tell you all."

The two men, one on each side, supported the woman, and she continued in a tremulous, husky voice:

"Jack, you are the lawful son of Sylvester Raymond. Years ago I kidnapped you, as you already know from the conversation between myself and Jake Hart, which you already know. Jake Hart is dead. He was shot by Jose for a traitorous act not an hour before you invaded these hills. It was my scheme to get possession of the Raymond property that led to your father's death on Red Bridge. I am responsible for it all, and I am going to meet my judgment. You are all witnesses of my dying confession that Jack Lever, the orphan, is truly the son of Sylvester Raymond, the millionaire."

She paused for lack of breath, and for a moment it was feared that the vital spark had fled. But she suddenly aroused herself and continued:

"I am responsible for my own death. This morning remorse overtook me. I could not stand it, and determined to end my miserable existence with strychnine. But I had nigh forgotten—Arline."

She turned her gaze upon the young girl, who came quickly forward and bent kindly over her.

"I have wronged you deeply, Arline. Your father is an innocent man. The real murderer of John Paul in Denver that dark night was myself. You are all witnesses to my dying confession, which shall save David Graham from the scaffold. Here is a paper written and signed by myself confessing all. Here in my presence witness it each one."

Jack took the paper like one in a dream. Pen and ink were upon a table near, and one by one those present put their names to the document as witnesses. When this was consummated Lucille Maynard turned to Arline and Jack, saying:

"I have done this much in reparation. Can you forgive me?"

Jack Lever's heart swelled as he thought of his father. Yet with an effort he drew nearer. Lucille Maynard did not speak again, but lay back like one going to sleep. Twenty minutes later her heart was stilled, and she was dead.

At this juncture Captain Foster and his band rode into the place. The victory had been a most complete one, such of the outlaws as had not been captured having been dispersed, and as their leader was now swinging from the branch of one of the mountain pines, it was safe to assume that the train-wrecking gang was forever broken up. The body of Lucille Maynard was interred beside that of her son, the outlaw in the Apache Hills, and then a start was made for Western City.

Jack and Arline, mounted upon a couple of the outlaws' horses, rode on ahead of the vigilants,

and reached Western City with the news of the victory some hours in advance. The greatest excitement prevailed when the report became circulated, and half of the entire population of the town turned out to welcome the return of the vigilants. Jack had hardly dismounted from his horse at the entrance of the Western Hotel when he was seized by the hand and confronted by Mr. Ford.

"Jack Lever, you are a hero," cried the railroad president, warmly. "It is you who have been the chief instrument in the breaking up of Black Jose's gang. The corporation is not ungrateful." "I must ask off from duty to-night," said Jack. "My heart is too full to think of anything but my affliction."

"Do you mean to say that Sylvester Raymond was really your father?" asked Mr. Ford.

"Yes. I have proof in the dying confession of Lucille Maynard. Here is her sworn statement duly witnessed."

Jack handed the document to Mr. Ford, who read it with amazement.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, excitedly; "by this we are to believe that David Graham is an innocent man?"

"Yes," replied Jack.

"Then there is need of great haste!" cried the railroad manager, with terrible earnestness, "for sentence has been passed, and David Graham has been sentenced to be executed upon the gallows to-day at four o'clock. It now lacks an hour of that time."

Nothing could have given Jack and Arline a greater shock. The young girl seemed about to faint.

"Oh, save my father!" she moaned.

"Heaven help me!" cried Jack Lever. "How can it be averted? You are sure there is no mistake, Mr. Ford?"

"None at all," replied the railroad manager. "Here is the proof."

He handed Jack a Denver daily newspaper of that day. There was no mistaking the fact, for the heavy headlines announced that David Graham, the convicted murderer of John Paul, was to be executed that day at four o'clock. It was now just three o'clock.

Like a meteor Jack flew to the telegraph office in the depot. He bounded in and without waiting to write the message he leaped over the barrier and struck the repeater himself, for he was an expert telegrapher. But his heart sank with the response to his touch. The instrument refused to work. He turned to the surprised lady operator.

"Great Heavens!" he gasped, "what is the matter?"

"You cannot use it," she replied.

"But a man's life depends upon it. What is wrong?"

"The wires are down between here and Gilman, forty miles distant," she made reply. "A gang of linemen have started out on a hand-car to repair them, but it is hardly likely that the line will be in working order again for six hours."

Arline and Mr. Ford had both followed Jack and now came into the office. Mr. Ford's dismay was intense, while Arline could scarcely stand from an attack of faintness and deep suffering of mind. A sudden light shone in the railroad

official's eyes. He glanced at his watch. It was just ten minutes past three. There was yet fifty minutes to spare. He turned to Jack Lever and cried:

"Old Forty is fired and ready to move. You can run down to Gilman and telegraph from there. There is a bare possibility that the dispatch will get there."

Jack tore out of the station like one possessed and ran to the round-house. Old Forty was there, but the stoker was not on hand. Jack Lever had no compunctions in the matter, and leaped into the cab all alone. In an instant he had run the engine out and coupled to a heavy Pullman coach, for an engine will go steadier and faster hitched to a train than by itself. The coupling was made, and he was about to open the throttle wide, when he heard a pleading voice and, looking out, saw Arline Graham with uplifted hands.

"Oh, take me with you, Jack," she pleaded. "I shall die to stay here."

Without an instant's hesitation Jack leaped down and assisted her into the cab. Then he sprang after her, and opened the throttle. Once more Jack Lever was called upon to exert his prime abilities as an engineer, and they were certainly taxed this time to the fullest extent.

On and on ran the train. Now they came to a mighty down grade, and a piercing scream burst from Arline. Just ahead was an obstacle on the track. Jack saw it, too. The obstacle he saw was the hand-car with the linemen on it going at a slow rate of speed. Jack gave the whistle valve a jerk, and an ear-splitting shriek went up. The linemen had only time to leap and Jack saw that they were safe, when the locomotive struck the hand-car. That was the last Jack saw of it, but he guessed that it had been throw from the track safely, for Old Forty yet hung to the steel. Now down the grade they went like a meteor. Up and down two more grades and Jack saw the smoke of the city of Gilman. On, faster and faster, and now they were in the city limits.

By chance the track was clear, and Jack drew his gallant iron horse up at the depot after a run of forty miles in exactly thirty-six minutes. Into the telegraph office he plunged, and the reprieve was in less than two minutes in Denver and reached the prison just as the sentenced man was having the black cap put over his head, and the noose was ready. David Graham was saved.

Our story of Jack Lever and his thrilling experiences on the rail is at an end. Although Jack found it hard to give up his favorite locomotive, he finally was compelled to do so, to take charge of the large property left him by his father. This made him an immensely wealthy man. One of the first acts was to establish Mr. Graham in the circus business from which the latter has long since made a fortune. But Arline figured no longer as the famous child rider, for she shortly afterward consummated her supreme happiness by accepting the hand and fortunes of handsome Jack Lever.

Next week's issue will contain "OUT WITH PEARY; OR, IN SEARCH OF THE NORTH POLE."

CURRENT NEWS

20,000 FILMS A SECOND

Messrs. H. Abraham, E. Bloch and L. Bloch report to the French Academy of Sciences that they have developed a machine that takes moving pictures at a speed of more than 20,000 a second.

CLOCK DIAL IS A SHADOW

A sickroom clock invented in Switzerland has an electric lamp behind a translucent dial, so that when an invalid in bed presses a button the dial throws the shadow of the hours and hands magnified upon the ceiling.

TOM CAT AS SECURITY

A mortgage filed with the Register of Deeds at Stockton, Mo., to secure a debt of \$46 includes as security one black tomcat, with white feet, named Tom. As no descriptions were listed with the other articles pledged, it is evident the cat was considered the most valuable part of the security by the mortgagee.

BARBER PROPOSES TO LEAP NIAGARA FALLS IN BARREL

A Bristol, England, barber, with a home-made barrel, will sail for America next month, and, some time during the summer, proposes to "leap" Niagara Falls. His name is Charles George Stephens, and when not at work in his hair-dressing establishment, his special hobby is spectacular stunts. Among his recent sensational feats are:

Kissing a lion in its den.

Shaving customers in a lion's den.

Parachute descents in balloons.

This modern Daniel, who will dare Niagara, has invented a special barrel into which he will be strapped, and which is fitted with special appliances to enable him to make the dangerous descent over the Falls. The barrel is six feet, two inches high; its diameter at top and bottom is 26 inches, and in the middle, 32 inches. A 100 pound weight fixed in the bottom is expected to keep it upright in the water.

HUNGRY RABBITS KILL TREES WORTH \$100,000

Hungry hordes of rabbits, believed to be descendants of fugitives from the game preserve of Charles F. Dietrich of New York, have gnawed the bark from and killed 5,000 fruit trees in Dutchess County. The damage is estimated at \$100,000.

The rabbits were unable to get their usual forage because of the blanket of ice and snow that covered the ground. Accordingly, they ate the bark from the trees, beginning at snow level and peeling it off as high as they could reach. They "girdled" the trees, as the technical expression has it. There is no way known of saving a "girdled" tree.

The most damage is near Millbrook, where Mr. Dietrich's preserve of 5,000 acres is a home for deer, pheasants and rabbits. Hunters killed hundreds of rabbits during the winter, but they multiply so fast that no diminution in their numbers is evident. Nursery men and florists agree that a new record for Dutchess County is being set for the purchase of fruit trees.

BLUE AND PINK SEALS URGED FOR BANK NOTES

A possibility of the near future is a standardization by the government of all United States currency for the purpose of facilitating quick change without the danger of short change.

The Treasury Department at Washington is now working on a proposition to mark bills of various denominations with a standardized color seal, so that any one can recognize notes of different denominations at a glance.

The plan, suggested by R. Frank Beauchant, of Philadelphia, is the outcome of an experience he had recently when he mistook a \$2 bill for a five.

The proposition, which he has submitted to the officials of the Treasury Department at Washington, and which is being considered along with others, provides for stamping the bills with a likeness of national figures, such as Washington, Lincoln, McKinley, etc. As a further mark of identification it is proposed to have a colored seal in one corner of the bill, such as a green seal for a one, a pink for a two, blue for a five, etc.

Mr. Beauchant has received a reply from John Burke, United States Treasurer, assuring him that such changes as he indicates are already under consideration by the government and that his plan is one of those being studied by a special committee appointed for the purpose.

Their consideration of the subject thus far has virtually resulted in the elimination of "colored bills" from the list of feasible proposals, it was said, and it is probable when the new designs are adopted portraits and corner designs, possibly vari-colored seals, will be employed as a means of ready identification rather than other systems of marking.

Treasury officials dislike the idea of using different dyes for the various denominations of bills. They offer as one objection that colored currency "wouldn't look like money"; as another that dyes—even the best—are not uniform and frequently fade or change when the money has been in circulation for a short time, and a third that the special grade of paper used in engraving money "takes" the dyes and inks now in use better than any other.

Carter Glass was the first Secretary of the Treasury to adopt the suggestion of uniformity in bills of the same denomination.

Acting on his predecessor's recommendation, Secretary Houston, when he took over the Treasury portfolio, appointed a committee of experts including W. H. Moran, chief of the secret service, and probably the foremost authority in the United States on currency designs and counterfeits, and William S. Broughton, commissioner of the public debt, to work out a schedule of standard designs. This committee has undertaken this work and probably will be engaged on it for several months.

The public is warned by Treasury officials not to accept at present any bills bearing an unfamiliar design.—Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger.

The Midnight Shadow

— OR —

THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN STEPS

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XIX (continued)

Once there, Dick Ketchum struck right down to the Sound, and out on Davenport's Neck.

Oliver asked him several times where he was going, but he could not get any very satisfactory answer.

"I've got a steer from those papers I found," was all he would say.

At last, after they had followed the shore for some distance, they came upon an old man who was fishing off a ledge of rocks.

"Can you tell me, my friend, where I can find a man by the name of Silas Overman?" asked Dick.

"Half a mile further on," replied the fisherman. "He keeps a boat renting place, and a little saloon. You will see his sign."

They walked on until they came to the place, well beyond the villas which are located on this point.

An old man who was behind the little bar waiting on two young fellows dressed in yachting suits, answered the name.

"I want to see you a minute after you are through," said the detective, and when the two young men went out Dick showed his shield.

"Do you know an old man named Henry Grady?" he asked.

Mr. Overman looked up quickly.

"What about him?" he inquired.

"Do you know him?"

"Yes."

"Did he hire a house which you have to rent around here?"

"Yes."

"I suppose you know he is crazy?"

"I suspected it, but he paid a year's rent in advance. The place is an old wreck, anyhow. If he burns it up the owners will be pleased."

"That's all right for you and the owners, but there are others who have something to say about it. Is the old man living in the house now?"

"He wasn't there yesterday. He told me that he expected to move in this week. He has the key."

"Is the house furnished or unfurnished?"

"Why, it is furnished after a fashion."

"Tell me all about this business, Mr. Overman, and before you begin let me tell you that Mr. Grady has kidnaped a young woman for whom we are in search. Of course you don't want to get mixed up in any such business as that."

"Indeed I do not!" cried Overman. "All I have to tell is that the old fellow got to coming here nights. I never saw him in the daytime. He said that he had an idiot son, and that he wanted a place where he could keep him concealed. I showed him the house, which is in my charge, and we struck a bargain. That's nearly all I know."

"He seems to have been sane enough to do business. What made you suspect that he was crazy?"

"From his very peculiar manner. He could scarcely talk straight, but he seemed to know what he was about."

"Was the son with him?"

"No, I never saw the son."

"How far is it to the house here?"

"Only a short walk. I'll take you there if you wish. I have a duplicate key. We can soon find out whether he is there or not. I should like to know myself."

"I wish you would," replied Dick, and they went.

On the way, having found that Mr. Overman was not only an intelligent person, but disposed to enter into the spirit of the matter, Dick Ketchum told him all about the case.

But they learned little more in return, except that the hiring of the house dated back two months, so it had been done while Henry Grady was still around attending to business.

The house stood on the shore, a large garden running down to the water's edge.

It was an old colonial mansion, pretty well on the road to ruin, and was surmounted by a high stone wall, cut off from the road by an iron gate.

"Just the very place to keep the shadow in, Oliver," remarked Dick Ketchum.

"Couldn't be better," replied Oliver. "Crazy or not, the old man seems to have known what he was about."

"He certainly does know enough to attend to business. But now to see what we are going to strike."

Mr. Overman had opened the gate by this time, and they went on between great clumps of shrubbery to the front door.

Here one end of the piazza had tumbled down and lay a wreck. The upper windows were concealed behind new boards. The heavy green shutters on the lower windows were securely nailed, all of which Mr. Overman informed them he had done at Henry Grady's request.

They opened the door and passed in.

In some of the rooms were old pieces of furniture, others were given over to dust and cobwebs.

Reaching the kitchen they made a discovery.

A table had been set, and there were bones and crusts of bread scattered about.

"This is since yesterday," cried Overman. "Somebody has been here."

"There were two rooms upstairs which I had fitted up with new furniture," he added. "Perhaps the old man has moved in after all. It certainly looks so."

"That's what it does," replied Dick. "Let us see. But we must go quietly," he added. "If we come upon the idiot alone we want to get him, and we may not if he takes alarm."

They ascended the stairs.

At the back the house was in better repair, and there were some fine and valuable pieces of old furniture in several of the rooms.

"Who lived in this house when it was in its prime?" asked Dick Ketchum.

(To be continued)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES.

GERMAN WARSHIPS GIVEN TO ALLIES

Particulars of the distribution of enemy warships among the Allies were recently published in Paris, according to an Associated Press dispatch dated April 6, from that city. France's share, which, it is stated, is ten per cent. of the total tonnage of all captured enemy ships, with the exception of submarines, represents 92,000 tons, half of which are German ships and the remainder Austrian vessels. France receives five cruisers and ten destroyers and the same number is given to Italy. Each of these powers will also receive a light cruiser and three destroyers, which may be used for one year for experimental purposes, but must be destroyed when that time elapses. France also receives the cruiser Emden, as well as forty submarines now in French ports. Ten of these may be placed in service. France, the dispatch states, is the only power to which the privilege of using captured submarines has been granted.

ABOUT BREEDING QUAIL

An interesting incident in reference to the breeding of quail was told recently by a gentleman living in the vicinity of Cypress, Texas. He says that an old quail hen nested in his yard, and that during the year three separate coveys of young birds were raised. The party mentioned watched the old bird during the breeding season, and was careful that nothing molested her or her eggs. Early in the summer the first covey came off with twenty birds, all of which were raised. Then another covey of sixteen was raised, and finally, late in the summer, another hatch of eighteen birds was brought off. That makes a total of fifty-four birds raised by one hen this season. The incident offers several interesting suggestions—namely, that the present closed season on the bird is about correct to cover the entire breeding season. It also shows that the killing of quail in September and October is nothing short of murder, as the old birds are too poor from caring for their young, and the young birds too young to be of any value for eating.

MIGHTY RIVERS RUSH THROUGH SKY

In his spectacular flight establishing a new aviation altitude record Major Rudolph W. Schroeder found trade winds of 200 miles an hour velocity far above the clouds, press dispatches state. The Dayton (Ohio) test pilot merely reported one of the new phenomena resulting from a study of the geography of the air, stimulated by aerial travel, according to a bulletin of the National Geographic Society.

"While the chemistry and physics of the atmosphere are understood, the geography of the air is still practically unknown," say Alexander McAdie in a communication to the society.

"We are aware that there are well marked areas, zones and levels in this inverted bowl, and, though we may not see them, there are mighty rivers, far surpassing any of the rivers of the earth in volume and speed, rushing on for miles and miles, flowing vertically as well as horizontal-

ly. There are vast calm areas and stagnant pools; also choppy seas and regions of great turbulence.

"We are learning to-day that there are various layers in the air, which must be explored and studied before airships can travel in safety. In flying men will use only the lower strata, the cloud levels. Above all clouds are far-stretching heights, which, too, must be explored, not by plane and dirigible, but by the sounding balloons of the aerographer. One might say offhand that there could be no geography of the air, for there are no continents, oceans or visible geographical features in this 'inverted bowl' which we call the sky. Do we not look clear through the atmosphere up into the heavens and, except for passing clouds, do we not know that there is nothing to be seen?

"If the density of the atmosphere remained constant it could all be compressed into a layer about five miles thick. In that case the highest mountain peaks would stand out in space piercing the so-called homogeneous atmosphere. But the density decreases with elevation, and when the aviator reaches an elevation of 10,000 meters he is in a medium which is only about one-third as dense as at the ground. There are no clouds above this level.

"The greatest discovery yet made in exploring the air is that the atmosphere consists of two great layers, the lower extending from sea level up to 10,000 meters, in which there is a steady fall of temperature and elevation. This is called the troposphere. Above this there is no fall and up to 20,000 meters a slight rise. The upper layer is known as the stratosphere.

"It is actually possible to-day for an airplane to rise from the ground to the bottom of the stratosphere, say about six miles, in one hour. If we want to explore somewhat higher, say twenty miles, we install light instruments on a sounding balloon.

"The intrepid aviator who tries to force his way at high speed against an adverse wind meets only with increasing resistance. But when the wind favors, then the winged airman spurns the slow fellow creeping on wheels below. With accelerated speed he passes over moor, mountain or sea, and if need be, vaults over the clouds.

"If the captain of the winged ship is not content with this speed, he has only to climb to upper levels, where the flow of the air increases to thirty and even forty meters per second, and in this stream he would move along with a speed relative to the earth of 200 miles an hour.

"These are not extreme values. In a stiff northwester, which the writer experienced some years back, the wind blew for seventy-two consecutive hours 7,565,000 meters, which is nearly thirty meters per second. This is equivalent to going 4,700 miles in three days, or twice the distance from Labrador to Ireland. The highest speed of the wind for any single hour was 164,000 meters (102 miles). For a period of about fifteen minutes the rate was 120 miles an hour."

BOB, THE ICE KING

— OR —

OUT TO FIND THE POLE

By J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XVIII (continued)

Thus it will be seen that the superstitions of the Greenlanders and the Esquimaux are in some ways alike.

"But the dogs! The sled, Orlok!" cried Thyra.

Orlok spread out his hands and declared that there were also spooks of dogs and spooks of sleds.

His uncle had once seen such an outfit as was flying from them over the ice then.

"Rats," said Sandy, when Thyra ventured to explain what Orlok had said. "If you say it was Dr. Ike, then it must have been Dr. Ike, but there hain't no sich a thing as ghosts. He must have gone off his nut. As you say, Miss Thyra, something has sure happened to Bob, and it has driven the doctor crazy."

But all these speculations were knocked in the head after a few minutes, when after they had seen the sled suddenly turn in towards the cliffs and vanish, which helped out the ghost theory, it just as suddenly reappeared, followed by a large sled pulled by six dogs, upon which sat a tall man heavily clad in furs with three Esquimaux behind him.

It was startling to Thyra and Sandy, who had firmly believed that they were at a point on the earth's surface to which no human being had ever penetrated.

"Shall I get the rifle, miss?" demanded Sandy.

"No, no! What use? What can we do against that force?" replied Thyra, who had become deathly pale.

And she had reason.

She had recognized the man who was driving the larger sled.

Lars Larsen, an old lover of hers at Upernik, a man whose hand she had three times rejected; a man whom she both feared and despised.

"Sandy," she gasped as the sled drew nearer, "I am afraid we are in a great deal of trouble. Oh, don't I wish Bob was here! But he is dead! He must be, or the doctor would never have returned alone. He is a traitor! He has done Bob harm, I am sure!"

On came the sled. Thyra stood her ground boldly.

As it drew nearer the man who was driving gave a shout.

But what he said was in Danish. Neither Sandy nor Orlok could understand.

Reining in his dogs, the giant fellow sprang from the sled and hurried up to Thyra.

She waved him back, but he would not have it. He caught her in his arms and kissed her.

She resisted a little, but not much.

It was useless, and the brave girl knew it.

Her safest course, in fact, her only course, was to let Larsen think he was having his way.

Their talk was a long one, of which Sandy could not understand one word.

In the meantime the supposed Dr. Ike got off his sled and stood staring.

He never spoke nor moved, until Larson suddenly turned to him and began talking rapidly with his fingers.

Clearly the doctor's double was deaf and dumb. He immediately began pulling down Thyra's tent.

"Here! Hold on there!" cried Sandy.

The man caught him by the arm and gave him a fling.

"Sandy!" said Thyra. "Listen! It can't be helped. We are practically prisoners. If you attempt to resist this man will shoot you."

"Who is he?" cried Sandy. "Is he going to take us all away from here?"

"Yes, and we shall have to go."

"But Bob! That dummy can't be Dr. Ike, much as he looks like him."

"No, no. He is not. I can't understand the resemblance. But we can do nothing, Sandy. I can only hope and pray that wherever we are going Bob and the doctor will be able to find us out. You must try to find some way to mark our trail."

"Hush! He will hear," said Sandy in a whisper.

"No! He don't understand one word of English," replied Thyra.

"Do you know him?"

"Oh, yes. He is a bad man, Sandy. I am in awful trouble. You must stand by me and we will hope for the best."

And such was the way it all came about.

Lars Larsen made off with everything. He told Thyra that he would have shot Bob and the doctor had they been there, and she believed him, for she knew him to be a thoroughly bad man.

Thus dogs, tents, provisions, everything, were taken. We know how Sandy managed to mark their trail, and in this he was not discovered.

They drove into the old crater by the road Bob and the doctor followed next day.

After they had crossed the bridge it was pulled away.

"Now, then, Thyra, at last you are in my power," said Larsen in Danish. "You say your father is dead. Very good. I'll be a father to you—a husband too. I'm out to find the Pole, and I feel sure of success. We will be married as soon as we return to Upernavik, and I will take up your father's business. As for these fellows you have been traveling with, you want to forget them. Don't ever mention that young man to me again."

"Lars," replied Thyra, "I told you once before at Upernavik, and I tell you again now, that rather than marry you I would kill myself, and I mean it. So beware that you don't drive me to desperation."

But Larsen only laughed and said:

"Oh, you'll get over all that nonsense, my dear. As for these fellows we are leaving behind us, let them freeze or starve—it is all one to me."

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

GERMAN BARON MURDERED

Baron von Westerholt Ysenburg, whose castle was sacked early in April, has been found dead in the neighborhood of his estate. He had been shot through the head and murder is suspected.

The baron shortly was to give testimony at Munster against the Reds, who it is reported, placed a price of 20,000 marks on his head. Lately he had been the recipient of many threatening letters.

BRITAIN TO GET 130 GERMAN WARSHIPS

Six former German warships, the battleships Baden, Helgoland, Posen, Rheinland, Westfalen and the cruiser Nurnberg, and 124 submarines have been allocated to Great Britain, according to announcement in the House of Commons recently. The United States will get the battleship Ostfriesland and the cruiser Frankfurt.

According to the announcement, France gets the battleship Thuringen and the cruiser Emden and thirty-eight submarines; Japan will receive the battleships Oldenburg and Nassau and the cruiser Augsburg, and Italy will get seven submarines. The ships scuttled at Scapa Flow, says the announcement, are to go to Great Britain.

Allocation of the remaining twelve light cruisers, fifty-nine destroyers and fifty torpedo boats depends on the selections made by France and Italy from the ships to be surrendered under the Austrian treaty.

By the above allocation Great Britain will obtain one-half of the larger ships disposed of, including five out of nine battleships, and more than two-thirds of the submarines. Japan is the only other nation to get more than one battleship in the division.

AGED WOMEN BOUND BY ARMED ROBBERS

When Ella Peterson, servant in the home of C. H. Dickinson, wealthy soap manufacturer, No. 1025 Park Avenue, Woodcliff, N. J., answered the door bell at noon the other day, two young men pointed pistols at her and commanded her to back quietly into the house.

They then covered their faces with handkerchiefs and followed her into the house, closing the door. The terrified girl backed into the dining room, where Mrs. Dickinson had just sat down with Mrs. E. I. Thomas, ninety-three, her mother; Mrs. C. G. Thomas, seventy-one, her sister-in-law, and Mrs. Alonzo Dickinson, ninety-one, her mother-in-law.

The robbers, with weapons extended, entered the room. While one covered the women, his companion ransacked the house, obtaining jewelry worth 500 and \$15 in cash. He overlooked \$150 in the pocket of a dress.

After tying all the women to their chairs and gagging them, the youths retreated through the back door. They met Otto Mangiella, an iceman, who was bringing ice into the house. They completed their job by taking \$200 from him and escaping.

The police were notified almost immediately by the iceman. The servant was so frightened she was unable to describe the bandits except that they were young. The elderly women victims survived the shock with no ill effects.

THE BERLIN CRIMINAL MUSEUM

The Berlin Criminal Museum, located in the Police Headquarters building at Alexanderplatz, owes its present condition with its large collection of valuable material to the efforts of the former Director of the Berlin Detective Force, Councillor Hoppe. This museum is very seldom visited by a "non-official" person; the fortunate one, who has been permitted to view the museum, has surely been previously investigated and full information has been obtained regarding his personality, etc. It is not that the Administrator of the Museum is discourteous or is unwilling to accommodate in showing his treasures. The visitors of the museum are closely scrutinized, because it is known that the museum contains material from which weak characters may draw lessons that for their fellow-creatures may be anything but pleasant; and the police department naturally does not wish to put itself in the position of giving instructions in the technique of crime.

The museum pretends to be nothing else but a collection of instructive material for the detectives, a school supplied with all the material needed for its special purpose. It therefore contains principally the tools of the criminal world in all its forms, such as implements for murder, printing presses by which counterfeit money is made and, in a special department, seized masochistic and sadistic instruments of torture. The many tools of thieves contained in the museum have been taken from apprehended criminals. From the primitive, common skeleton-key to the highly developed artistic instrument of this type with movable bit, all possible styles of the illegal means are to be found that help the criminals to "reach the source of wealth." Small, miniature keys, works of the greatest precision, hang next to heavy chisels, destined to do the coarser work. Nippers and levers, with which the thieving gentry is supplied, are found there in large variety. Perhaps the most scientific exhibit is that of the tools and supplies of the forging and document-altering profession.

A special object of the museum is the safe exhibited for purposes of study. It was at one time opened by safe-breakers and serves now as an example as "how it should be done."

Practically the entire collection of instruments of the museum, taken from the apprehended criminals, represents the home industry of the criminals. We can see that this class contains artists as well as bunglers. The most inventive and smartest are possibly the poachers. They dress their rifles and slings in the strangest forms. The elegant walking cane has killed many a deer. It is a finely lacquered rifle barrel; its butt can be carried in the pocket and only need be screwed on to complete a gun.

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NEW YORK, MAY 26, 1920.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

NOVEL LENS CLEANER

Almost any ordinary medium that can be used is likely to smear and even scratch a lens in the cleaning. A very perfect lens cleaner can be made by using the medulla or pith of such plants as sun-flower rush, or elder. Strips of the dry pith are cut and these are fastened with an adhesive cement to a piece of cork. The pith may be arranged in rows with small spaces in between. The lens is rubbed gently with the novel cleaner and all marks disappear.

LAND 75-POUND ROCKFISH

Captain Holmes and James McCoolley went fishing off the Green Creek clam beds at Cape May, N. J., April 26. While drifting over the beds Holmes hooked what he thought was a black drum, but to the surprise of these veterans of the bay, when the fish was landed it was a rockfish and tipped the scales at seventy-five pounds.

This is the largest rockfish ever caught in Delaware Bay. Fishermen say that flounders, croakers and weakfish will be plentiful in the Lower Delaware Bay and River this year. Capt. Holmes has caught several heavy weakfish in his pond at Green Creek in the last week.

STATE HOUSE CEILING FOUND TO BE GLASS

If at times in the last sixty years the deliberations of the Ohio legislators seemed to indicate the presence of brain cobwebs, there was reason for it and all may be forgiven now.

When the State House custodian ordered a thorough cleaning of the Senate chamber, workmen found the ceiling to be made largely of glass, but so thick was the coating of dust and debris that the present generation had supposed it to be of solid wood. The ceiling had not been cleaned since 1858. Four truck loads of dirt were removed from the ceiling.

One of the consequences of the cleaning will be to reduce Ohio's electric light bill, since light will now penetrate into the chamber, if not into the debates, during day sessions.

HOW TO SAVE MONEY

Ten dollars a month saved and put out at 4 per cent. compound interest, will show an accumula-

tion of \$1,475 in ten years; \$7.50 a month will show \$1,106; \$6 a month will show \$885; \$5 a month will show \$737; \$4.50 a month will show \$633; \$4 a month will show \$589; \$3 a month will show \$442 and \$2.50 a month will show \$368, says the Thrift Magazine.

Any sum saved and invested at 4 per cent. compound interest will more than double itself in twenty years. Save \$10. At the end of the first year you will have \$10.40; in five years you will have \$12.70. At the end of the tenth year your interest will have grown to \$6.20, and at the end of the twentieth year your interest will be \$10.70, or more than double your original sum. Carried along on the same basis \$100 will become \$207 and \$1,000 will grow to \$2,070.

Save 10 cents a day and in ten years your daily savings will be \$365, in addition to \$80.30 compound interest, making a total of \$445.30.

If you save 15 cents a day for ten years with interest compounded at 4 per cent., you will have \$668.18; 20 cents a day will net \$890.99; 50 cents a day will mean \$2,227.73, and \$1 a day will give you a total of \$4,445.74.

LAUGHS

"Do you find married life 'one grand, sweet song?'" "Yes: A 'symphony in A Flat.'"

Alice—What makes you think your new photographs are so horrid? Gladys—All my girl friends ask for one, but my male friends don't.

"You look just the same as ever," said the Dime Savings Bank. "Well," replied the boy as he shook the bank, "there appears to be no change in you."

"That boy of mine won't do a stroke of work. He just sits around all day and uses bad language to every one who speaks to him." "Why not get him a job as janitor?"

"Did youse git anything?" whispered the burglar on guard, as his pal emerged from the window. "No, de bloke wot lives here is a lawyer," replied the other in disgust. "Dat's hard luck,"

"I doubt if Henpeck ever draws a sober breath any more." "He doesn't, and his wife has no one to blame for it but herself. The first time he fell from grace his wife told him she didn't think it worth while to talk to him while he was in that condition."

"Did you hear how Murphy spoiled his chance of getting an engine?" inquired one railroad man of another. "No," was the reply. "How did it happen?" "Why, they were testing Murphy's eyes to see if he would be all right in colors. Everything went along smoothly until they put out an orange colored card. When the smoke cleared away, instead of having an engine Murphy was in jail on seven different charges, ranging from assault with intent to kill to wilful destruction of property."

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

ORIGIN OF "UNCLE SAM"

The origin of "Uncle Sam" as the personification of the United States was as follows: "Samuel Wilson, commonly called 'Uncle Sam,' was an inspector at Troy, New York, of beef and pork, purchased for the government, after the declaration of war against Great Britain, in 1812. A contractor named Elbert Anderson bought a quantity of provisions, and the barrels were marked 'E. A.,' the initials of his name, and 'U. S.,' for United States. The latter initials puzzled Wilson's workmen, who inquired what they meant. A wag answered: 'I don't know, unless they mean 'Uncle Sam.''" A large amount of goods afterward passed through Wilson's hands marked in the same way, and he was rallied on the extent of his possessions. The joke spread, and soon the initials of the United States were taken to mean 'Uncle Sam.'"

ABOUT OUR STOMACHS

How insulting we can be to our stomachs and get away with it is well illustrated in a report made to Science by Ralph C. Holder, Clarence A. Smith and Philip B. Hawk on some experiments they made at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia.

It has been said by one of our leading physiologists that "what a man likes best he digests best," but these experimenters proved that so far as actual digestion was concerned an unpalatable meal eaten in untidy surroundings was almost as well utilized as a palatable meal in pleasant surroundings.

Some students were fed for a week on savory food, carefully weighed in an attractive room and all their excretions were weighed. Then for two days the same kinds of food were made disgusting by mixing together meat, biscuits, jelly, corn-starch, oleomargarine, pudding, &c., in a porcelain dish smeared with charcoal. This they ate upon a dirty table strewn with dirty dishes, while, to make the meal repulsive to the nostrils, some indol was sprinkled under the table. One of the students could not eat it but the other, who managed to get the unsavory mess into his stomach, digested within one per cent. as much of his meals as he had when daintily fed.

All of which proves that it is easy to insult the stomach without arousing it to hit back, but it does not throw any real doubt upon the statement that what we like best we digest best, for the stomach, long-suffering as it is, has its limit of tolerance.

HANGING IS FUN FOR "FARMER" BURNS

"Farmer" Burns, the great old-time wrestling champion who discovered Frank Gotch and taught the Iowa farmer all he knew, was born to be hung, but not to die that way. Hanging did not inconvenience him at all. He tried it once on a wager and a small wager at that. They arranged a regular scaffold with a three-foot drop, adjusted the hangman's noose with the knot suggested under Burn's left ear according to custom and sprung the drop.

The wrestler's 160 pounds brought up with a jerk that made the rope hum like a fiddle string and he hung suspended by the neck for nearly three minutes. Throughout that time he carried on a conversation with the bystanders, joking and kidding his "executioners." He was cut down none the worse for wear.

How did he do it? He had exercised and strengthened his neck muscles through long years of training so that they were strong enough to prevent the constriction of his wind-pipe even from the pull of the hangman's noose. In those days, the strangle hold was not barred and Burns had trained himself so that when Strangler Lewis or any of the other strong armed grapplers secured and applied that hold the Farmer could work his head free from the dangerous grasp.

You do not have to flop to the wrestling mat to have the strangle hold applied to you nowadays. Hard luck or hard times or illness or disaster or old age may shut your financial wind off at any time and gradually force your shoulders closer to the padded canvas until the slap of the referee's hand on your opponent's back declares you the loser of the struggle.

But you can strengthen your neck, just as Farmer Burns did. Constant and regular exercise in saving will do it, the putting aside of a certain definite amount of the envelope each pay day. Burns used weights to exercise his neck muscles. War Savings Stamps, Treasury Savings Certificates and Liberty Bonds are the best apparatus for financial exercise. They can be adjusted to the financial strength of any neck, rich or poor.

If you have exercised with them, then when you bring up with a jerk at the end of your financial rope you can hold out until the pressure is removed.

PEOPLE INCLINING TOWARDS THRIFT

Indication that the public has ceased to be spendthrift and is again inclining toward thrift and sound investment is seen in the heavy inquiries for small denomination Liberty Bonds at banks and brokers throughout the country.

The demand has reached the Treasury Department, many dealers having exhausted their available supply of the "popular" sizes of these securities, it was announced by the Savings Division of the Treasury Department.

To supply the large "over the counter" demand for \$50 and \$100 bonds at present favorable market prices, the Treasury Department has issued instructions to the Federal Reserve Banks which will expedite exchange of bonds of larger denominations for the small units.

The instructions also provide ways and means by which banks and dealers may obtain the smaller denominations in the first instance if their customers require them.

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FROM ALL POINTS

WOMAN FLIES TO MOROCCO

A French aviatrix has arrived at Rabat, Morocco, from Paris by air, having made the flight in two days. This is the first case of a woman flying from France to Morocco. Her route was via Toulon, Barcelona, Valencia, Alicante, Granada, Malaga and Tangier. The distance covered was about 1,150 miles.

ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS BY AIRPLANE

An elaborate campaign of exploration in the Arctic regions by airplanes has been under discussion in Germany for a year past. It is proposed to establish the principal base on the west coast of Spitsbergen, and to use a considerable number of airplanes, always flying in pairs. Relatively slow machines of large carrying capacity would be used for laying out depots and marking routes, while lighter and faster machines would be used for explorations.

SULPHUR MINE IN CRATER

In the crater of a snow-capped volcanic mountain on Unalaska Island, one of the Aleutian group, is a large deposit of sulphur, believed to contain from 10,000 to 15,000 tons, says *Popular Mechanics*. A claim has been filed for the location, and mining operations probably will start in the near future. Subterranean heat and a hot vapor, the latter issuing from cracks in the rocks, keep the deposit free from ice and snow, though these permanently cover nearly all of the remainder of the peak, which is about 6,000 feet in height. Another sulphur deposit has been discovered on Akun Island, in the same group, and a third near Stepovak Bay, on the southern shore of the Alaskan Peninsula.

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NEW FOOD IN PARIS

Since the price of a cutlet has risen to that of the pre-war leg of lamb, Paris has taken to experimenting in strange foods.

Some weeks ago lion steaks were served at a luncheon party in a famous restaurant. Now humps of camel are being offered for sale in the Montmartre. Where the camel came from is something of a mystery, but the keeper of a private zoo, hit by the high cost of living, is suspected of having made the sacrifice. When dressed the animal provided more than 700 pounds of good meat.

The first difficulty arose when it had to be classified by customs officers at the city gates, who levy a small toll on all foodstuffs. After long discussion they came to the conclusion that it was game, and charged for it accordingly.

Like goat and venison, it has been decided that camel will perhaps improve with keeping, and a sale is announced to take place. For the cheapest part 3 francs a pound is to be charged. The hump will go for 5 francs, and skin 2 francs.

With the lion steaks, the camel is the only food of the desert. It is the only food of the desert.

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Oil of Korein

A prominent Philadelphian, George Reynolds, Walton Avenue, lost 20 lbs. the first month and continued using Oil of Korein, massaging himself daily, until he reduced 64 lbs. Mrs. J. B. Hansen, Plattsville, reduced 20 lbs. in less than 2 months. Mrs. L. C. Patrick, Niland, wanted to reduce 8 lbs. and did so in two weeks. Miss Ray lost 69 lbs. An Albany business man, F. G. Drew, lost 56 lbs. in 3 months. Many say "fat seems to melt away," or "measurements decrease like magic," etc. Legions of voluntary testimonials.

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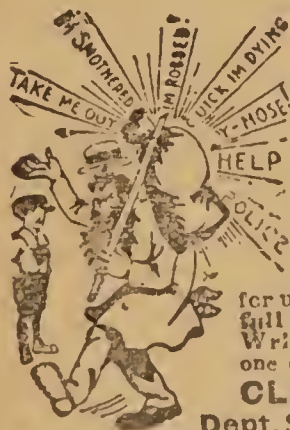
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DRINK

If you know some one who drinks whisky, beer, gin or any other alcoholic beverages, to his injury, you may obtain FREE, a very helpful book by writing to Edw. J. Woods, DA-103, Station F, New York, N. Y. It shows how to conquer drink habit.

INK

25 CENTS A QUART

Superior quality blue, black, red or green. Put up in dry form, 1 powder in water makes 1 quart. Worth three or four times at retail price. 1 powder, 25 cents; 6 powders, \$1.00 Postpaid. Big opportunity for agents. Shelton Chemical Co., 101-A, Shelton, Conn.

Gained 25 Lbs. in 2 Months SINCE QUITTING



TOBACCO HABIT

HJALMAR NELSON (address on application), whose photo appears at the left, learned of my book and other information being given **FREE**, explaining how Tobacco Habit can be conquered by oneself, safely, speedily and completely. He obtained the information and reported a gain of 25 pounds, as well as

VICTORY IN THREE DAYS OVER SLAVERY TO TOBACCO HABIT

HERE are more letters—voluntary testimonials. Though they are a small fraction of the thousands and thousands that can be produced, they are sufficient to show you what may be expected after the **TOBACCO HABIT** is overcome within 72 hours by the simple Woods Method. **READ THESE!**

"While addicted to the tobacco habit every muscle and joint ached, and I had almost given up business. I was poor in health, weighing about 130 pounds. Now I am well, weigh 165 pounds, and can work every day. I have never wanted to chew or smoke since following the Woods method."—A. F. Shelton. (Full address on application.)

"I have no craving for tobacco; this I consider wonderful after having used a pipe for 35 years. I have gained 12 pounds in two months, which is very good at the age of 59 years. To say that the benefits far exceed my expectations is putting it mildly. Anyone in doubt can refer to me."—John Brodie. (Full address on application.)

"I had weighed as low as 128 pounds, never got over 135 while I used tobacco. Now I weigh 156 pounds. Everyone wants to know why I got so fleshy; I tell them to follow Edward J. Woods' method for overcoming tobacco and find out."—W. S. Morgan. (Full address on application.)

"May God bless you. I am feeling finer every day of my life—not like the same person. My appetite is better, and my stomach is all right. I can hold out in walking better, my voice is better and my heart is stronger."—Mrs. Mattie E. Stevenson. (Full address on application.)

"Have used tobacco in all forms (mostly chewing) for 15 years, using about a plug of tobacco a day. I began following your Method on a Friday noon and after that day the craving for tobacco was gone. I am always ready to praise you and the good work you are doing. I can also say that I have gained nine pounds in seven weeks, and feel like a new man."—Robert S. Brown. (Full address on application.)

"My husband hasn't smoked a single cigarette, and has no desire to smoke since following your method of quitting. He looks like a new man—the best I ever saw him. He gained seventeen pounds, and is feeling fine."—C. C. Rogers. (Full address on application.)

QUIT TOBACCO EASILY NOW!

STOP RUINING YOUR LIFE

Why continue to commit slow suicide, when you can live a really contented life, if you only get your body and nerves right? It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to rid oneself of tobacco by suddenly stopping with "will power"—don't do it!

The correct way is to eliminate nicotine poison from the system and genuinely overcome the craving.

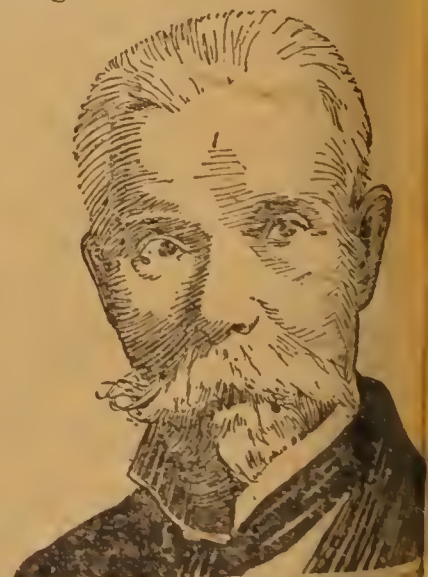
Tobacco is poisonous and seriously injures the health in several ways, causing such disorders as nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gas belching, gnawing or other uncomfortable sensation in stomach, constipation, headache, weak eyes, loss of vigor, red spots on skin, throat irritation, catarrh, asthma, bronchitis, heart failure, melancholy, lung trouble, impure (poisoned) blood, heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite, bad teeth, foul breath, lassitude, lack of ambition, weakening and falling out of hair and many other disorders.

Overcome that peculiar nervousness and craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipe, chewing tobacco or snuff.

Here is an opportunity to receive **FREE** a reliable treatise on the subject, containing interesting and valuable information that you should be glad to have. This book tells all about the renowned Three Days' Method by which Mr. Nelson, and thousands and thousands of others, saved themselves from the life-wrecking tobacco habit. The book on tobacco and snuff habit will be mailed **FREE TO YOU** in plain wrapper, postpaid. All you need do is

FREE

merely **REQUEST IT** by using this coupon or writing a letter or postcard to the address below:



"I sleep well and have no restless or nervous feeling. I am past seventy-eight years of age and feel fine since adopting Woods Method."—John P. Mar

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Name

Address

EDWARD J. WOODS

TA-103, Station F, New York, N. Y.

SUGAR FROM SAWDUST

High grade sugar can be made out of ordinary sawdust at a cost of about 3 cents a pound, according to Robert Hyde, a University of Manchester graduate and a chemist of Colwell Street, Pittsburgh, who says he has invented a process for effecting this wonderful transmutation. One pound of sawdust will make three-quarters of a pound of sugar. The chemist displayed a sample of sugar which he said had been extracted from sawdust. In discussing his invention, Hyde said:

"While I was studying chemistry in Germany an old professor made a statement one day about the properties of sugar that left a lasting impression on me. I set out to apply his statement to the extraction of sugar from wood. Experiment after experiment failed. After eight years' research, quite by accident one day in my laboratory I upset a flask containing a certain liquid on some excelsior. The effect was peculiar and I investigated. The result was the realization of my dream. If made by hand the sugar will cost approximately 3 1-2 cents a pound, while if made by machinery would cost about 2 cents a pound.

New Hair Growth After BALDNESS

HAIR GROWN ON MR. BRITTAIN'S BALD HEAD BY INDIANS' MYSTERIOUS HAIR GROWER

My head at the top and back was absolutely bald. The scalp was shiny. An expert said that he thought the hair roots were extinct, and there was no hope of my ever having a new hair growth.

Yet now, at an age over 66, I have a luxuriant growth of soft, strong, lustrous hair! No trace of baldness. The pictures shown here are from my photographs.



Photo when bald.

INDIANS' SECRET OF HAIR GROWTH

At a time when I had become discouraged at trying various hair lotions, tonics, specialists' treatments, etc., I came across, in my travels, a Cherokee Indian "medicine man" who had an elixir that he asseverated would grow my hair. Although I had but little faith, I gave it a trial. To my amazement a light fuzz soon appeared. It developed, day by day, into a healthy growth, and ere long my hair was as prolific as in my youthful days.

That I was astonished and happy is expressing my state of mind mildly.

Obviously, the hair roots had not been dead, but were dormant in the scalp, awaiting the fertilizing potency of the mysterious pomade.

I negotiated for and came into possession of the principle for preparing this mysterious elixir, now called Kotalko, and later had the recipe put into practical form by a chemist.

That my own hair growth was permanent has been amply proved. Many men and women, also children, have reported satisfactory results from Kotalko.



From recent photo.

How YOU May Grow YOUR Hair



For women's hair.

My honest belief is that hair roots rarely die even when the hair falls out through dandruff, fever, excessive dryness or other disorders. I have been told by experts that often when hair falls out the roots become imbedded within the scalp, covered by hard skin, so that they remain for a time like bulbs or seeds in a bottle which will grow when fertilized. Shampoos (which contain alkalis) and hair lotions which contain alcohol are enemies to the hair, as they dry it, making it brittle. Kotalko contains those elements of nature which give new vitality to the scalp and hair. To prove the GENUINENESS of Kotalko, I will send the recipe FREE on request. Or I will mail a testing box of Kotalko with the recipe for 10 cents, silver or stamps, if you mention this publication. Satisfy yourself. You want to stop falling hair, eliminate dandruff or cover that bald spot with healthy hair. Get the dime testing box NOW, apply once or twice daily—watch in your mirror! Address:

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James W. Greely, Portland, Maine.

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My face is clear of pimples for the first time in eight years, thanks to you and "Indiamain."

Sincerely, Magdalen Bernt.

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